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NEW STATES

Is Maggie Thatcher really a moderate?

SUMMER BOOKS

Peter Porter on Byron's war

John McVicar on the East End

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WHAT'S YOUR POISON?

Supermarkets: the unhealthy truth

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NEW STATESMAN Vol 101 No 2620 5 June 1981

Supermarkets: the unhealthy truth

Cover photo: Judah Passow

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Sir Michael and Mr Thorpe

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL, it appears, remains blandly unshaken by the latest — though probably not last — reverberations of the Thorpe case. There is nothing to worry about, he suggests, in the fact that David Holmes discloses to the *News of the World* that one of the country's leading politicians really did incite him to murder. There is no need to re-open the case, or go tampering with the finality of the jury's verdict. All will be well, it's implied, if people will just be good enough to forget about the matter.

Before the smokescreen gets too thick, it may be worth re-stating what the issue is, and why some further effort should be made to resolve it. First, any discussion of 're-opening the case' is quite beside the point. Whatever one thinks of Jeremy Thorpe and his misdeeds, in no decent society could he be called on to face double jeopardy before the criminal law. The issue concerns the competence, and accountability, of the prosecution system which the Attorney-General and the Director of Public Prosecutions are supposed to be running.

As we said when defending ourselves from attacks made when we published an interview with one of Thorpe's jurors, the image of the sternly efficient prosecutor isn't one the Left finds very congenial. But sentiment should not obscure the fact that no society — however organised — can afford to be without the means for correcting corruption, and abuse of power.

The interview did not disturb the finality of the jury's verdict, any more than the *News of the World*'s disclosures do. It provided evidence, now supplemented, to suggest that the prosecution, confronted with a wily and well-appointed politician, was unable to perform its job with reasonable competence. The Attorney-General has not shown any desire to come to terms with this awkward truth.

Rather, his efforts have gone into prosecuting the *New Statesman* for contempt of court and, when that failed ignominiously, into an elaborate modification of the law designed to make such prosecutions successful in future. (This is the ancient Establishment sport of goalpost-moving).

The worst thing is that his conduct forms part of a pattern. It was under Sir Michael Havers' regime that an attempt was made to prosecute members of the Paedophile Information Exchange while concealing the identity of Sir Peter Hayman, a retired diplomat sadly embroiled in child pornography. Sir Michael implied, in a public statement, that Sir Peter had nothing to do with the matter; this turned out to have been an unwise remark.

More recently, he tried to sew up a deal in the Ripper case, under which a manslaughter plea would have been accepted with little or nothing said in court. The judge unstitched it, whereon Sir Michael had to change tack and argue that Peter Sutcliffe, after all, was *not* a schizophrenic. The impression one has is that any argument will do for him: he maintains in Parliament that no modification to the contempt law should be made 'on the basis of a single case', when that case is the Government's successful prosecution of the National Council for Civil Liberties, but adopts the reverse position when the single case is the unsuccessful prosecution of the NS.

In short, he stands firmly within the tradition of recent British public administration: one of augmenting the arbitrary powers of the State, and protecting the activities (or inactivities) of the *nomenclatura*. The Russian label for bureaucratic privilege is appropriate: Tory rhetoric about liberty obscures the fact that Tory actions accelerate Britain's real drift towards authoritarian incompetence.

What is required is a thorough overhaul of the entire public prosecution system, with clear lines being drawn between political and non-political functions. A simple difficulty of the Department of Public Prosecutions is that the quality of its staff is not inspiring, but a little reflection will show that few inspired lawyers will ever want to work for a department whose activities, in the end, are dictated by the arbitrary whim of a minister in the government of the day. The only service Sir Michael does us is to expose the absurdities of his office so thoroughly as to make the case for reform undeniable. □

Missiles are not blastproof or mobile, reports Duncan Campbell

Work starts on cruise silos

CRUISE MISSILES, despite their vaunted mobility which is supposed to be a principal advantage, are to be put into missile silos now under construction at the British cruise bases. A report to the US Senate reveals that the missile shelters at these bases, Greenham Common near Newbury, and Molesworth near Northampton, are to be hardened to withstand shock waves from nuclear explosions up to 2000 pound per square inch. This is the same degree of 'hardening' as is currently used at US ICBM bases. In theory, the cruise missiles should then be able to survive a one megaton nuclear weapon exploding as little as ¼ of a mile away.

Cruise shelters and other facilities are now under construction at the first British cruise base, Greenham Common. The precise site chosen is in the extreme west of the airfield — the area closest to the town of Newbury. The new site is ringed with watchtowers and multiple fences, left over from an earlier era of nuclear weapons storage.

The construction of the blast-proof cruise missile shelters means that the US does not anticipate having enough time to move the missiles away, and that they will thus be targets for an early and massive nuclear strike. This indeed was anticipated during the recent home defence exercise, *Square Leg*. The British government has backed this view up by issuing a Home Defence circular suggesting that war plans should now be ready to operate within 48 hours. □

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Oil companies could already produce petrol without lead in 1979

No need to stall on plans for lead-free petrol

THE UK OIL industry was planning to produce lead-free petrol during 1979 in a matter of months to combat the effects of industrial disputes. Yet both government and oil companies now claim that lead-free petrol cannot be produced in bulk until 1990 at the earliest and that merely reducing the lead level from the present 0.40 to 0.15 grams per litre (g/l) will take four years.

They argue that the changeover process is too complex, too expensive, and that cars currently in production could not cope with the 'new' petrol produced.

During the 78/9 winter, lead additives for petrol could not be delivered to the refineries from the Associated Octel plant at Ellesmere Port, Britain's sole producer of lead additives. To conserve stocks already held at the refineries, the level of lead in the petrol supplied to filling stations was severely reduced, often below the 0.15g/1 level. A small amount of lead-free petrol was also produced by Esso — and other companies were preparing to go lead-free when lead stocks ran out.

Other countries have reduced lead levels in petrol in a much shorter time than the UK government claims is needed. In Sweden, the cooperatively-run OK Oil company switched to a lead level of 0.15g/1 within a year of deciding to do so. Scientists in Australia, which expects to go lead-free in 1985, maintain the change can be made in 1983.

Eighty per cent of UK cars need high-octane 4-star petrol and, allegedly, cannot run on petrol with a lead level under 0.15 without engine modifications. But the octane rating in the 1979 'emergency' petrol was reduced by half an octane and the lead level dipped under the 0.15 mark with no detrimental effects.

To run permanently on lead-free petrol, the majority of cars sold in Britain do need modification. But, according to British Leyland, existing ranges such as Rover and Princess can run up to 30,000 miles on lead-free petrol, and other models up to 5,000 miles. Ford has just launched a version of its Transit van which can run on lead-free fuel. The extra cost is £75.

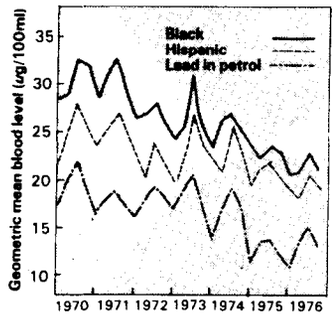
The government's decision to reduce the UK petrol lead level to 0.15 is based on mounting evidence of the harm done to children by lead pollution. Results of a survey of Greenwich schoolchildren by Drs Yule and Lansdown were a major factor in persuading DHSS officials of the urgency in banning leaded petrol.

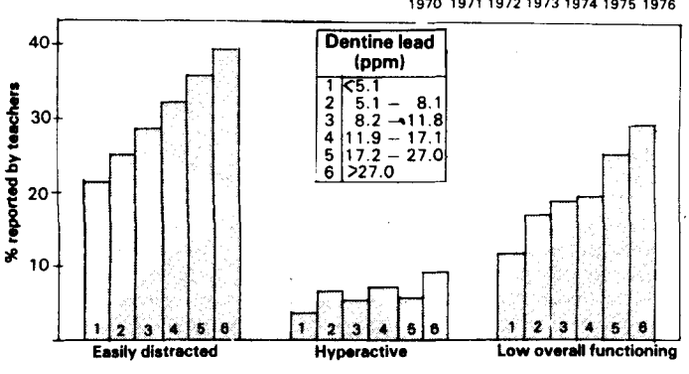
The unpublished study reveals that low levels of lead pollution (well below official safety levels) have a devastating effect on the behaviour and intelligence of young children.

There is an average IQ loss of seven points in children across the intelligence range — with a spread of between five to 15 points. Such a drop in IQ can more than double the number of UK children considered to be mentally retarded.

The Yule/Lansdown study backs the findings of American studies by Herbert Needleman and I.H. Billick, which confirmed that children suffer severe damage at much lower levels of lead intake than previously accepted — and that most of that lead comes from petrol fumes. □

Two key studies showing what lead in petrol does to children.
The Billick study (1979) monitored 78,000 New York children between 1970 and 1976. Blood lead levels in the children went up and down according to the level of lead in New York petrol. The Needleman study, below (1979) looked at the classroom behaviour of 2,146 New England children. Those with the highest lead levels (bar 6) came out worst on most behaviour ratings. Overall, children's performance progressively worsened as their lead levels increased.





Patrick Wintour on bias inside the BBC

Minds that never meet

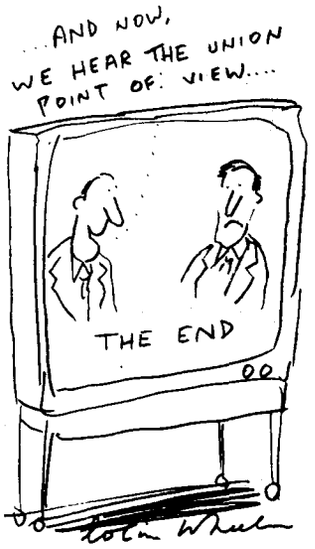
MINUTES of a BBC board meeting in April reveal an odd mixture of attitudes among senior executives on how to deal with the Glasgow Media Group's allegations of right-wing bias in political coverage. David Holmes, chief assistant to the Director-General, told the meeting that

> The allegations ... were permeating deeply into the consciousness of the general public, even down to influencing the way some of the BBC's own trainees based their appreciation of its news coverage.

Though there had 'never been a time in the past 10 or 15 years when the trade union movement and the Labour Party had trusted the broadcasters', Holmes felt that the time had come when the BBC should commission some research into its own operations, and be seen to consider this an important step. Meanwhile

> someone within the organisation should prepare the ammunition . . . it was high time to counter-attack.

But how? Bernard Tate, head of the Special Current Affairs Unit, Radio, thought more accusations



of bias were likely, and that a joint BBC-IBA response might be useful. Richard Francis, Director of News and Current Affairs, thought this might be 'construed as collusion'.

Francis admitted the Glasgow charges could not be answered by a simple time-and-head-count: attitudes, and use of words, were involved, so that reasearch would have to be sophisticated. The meeting realised that this would consume considerable time and resources, as had ITN's reply in the *New Statesman* (20 March).

THOUGH IT was agreed that no such research had been done by the ▶

Michael Coren on Tory students' link with Special Branch

Students asked to inform police

WEST MIDLANDS POLICE officers have approached at least two student activitists with the intention of gaining information about 'left-wing subversives' in further education. Both Adrian Chandler, a second year student at Aston University, and Grace Morris, Vice-President of Birmingham University, were contacted.

Adrian Chandler was left a card by two plain-clothes men 'looking like salesmen' asking him to 'Ring 236 5000 between 3 and 5 . . . ask for Alan or George'. Knowing that this was the number of West Midlands Police Mr Chandler was extremely worried but over the phone he was simply told 'not to be concerned, you have done nothing wrong'.

'When they arrived George did most of the talking' said Chandler; 'They said that the place was crawling with subversives and that the Chief Constable liked them to keep their finger on the pulse; I repeatedly asked them where they got my name from but the only reaction they offered was to point at an FCS (Federation of Conservative Students) poster on the wall and say: 'You're a member of FCS aren't you?'

The two men knew Mr Chandler's nickname, used only by close friends, and seemed well informed. They insisted on the secrecy of the operation and gave an extension number, 2191, as a contact. Adrian Chandler reported the approach to the university authorities and will not be co-operating.

However, there have been other similar events at Aston. An Iraqi student was threatened by police with removal of his visa unless he acted as an informant. Grace Morris was also approached by 'Alan' and again he refused to say where he had received her name.

West Midlands Police admit: 'We do use informants from time to time, but this matter is under consideration. We are not prepared to say which branch these men came from.' A minor cover-up is now under way. When I phoned the extension number given to Mr Chandler, I was informed that 'it did not exist' and that 'there was no Alan and George here' — both men had identified themselves as policemen to their proposed informants.

Since the incident Mr Chandler has received an unofficial apology from local police but former senior figures in the Federation of Conservative Students believe that 'Special Branch have been receiving FCS mailings for some time . . . It is no coincidence that these contacts are all in FCS.'

The FCS at Tory Central Office are not in a talkative mood: 'We are not prepared to say anything on a matter we know nothing about.' □

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▶BBC the executives present already knew what they thought. Alan Protheroe, assistant director of News and Current Affairs, 'wanted to see the work of the Glasgow Group shown for what he considered it to be . . . a poorly researched and partial study by a group of politically motivated people.'

Roger Bolton, editor of *Panorama,* went further, saying that

> in one sense the position of the BBC and that of the Glasgow group were irreconcilable. In an argument between Marxists whe wished to replace the system of parliamentary democracy and the BBC which was 'for' parliamentary democracy and which operated within and reflected it, there could not be a meeting of minds. To that extent it could be said that the BBC was biased and it could not win the argument that, in that respect, it was not.

The executives were unclear how to respond to 20 senior academics, 73 MPs, and general secretaries of 22 major unions who recently wrote to the BBC saying that a number of academic works had highlighted

> an enormous gap between the obligations of the broadcasters to give a balanced account, and what they actually do.

The signatories asked the BBC to prepare a series of TV programmes dealing with these arguments. Peter Saynor, Head of Informaiton, felt that 'simple denial' of Glasgow's claims would not be adequate. But he thought it important to remember that the signatories of the letter were 'politically committed people' and it was

> unlikely that the BBC could change their minds.

The BBC have already made two tentative efforts to counter the Glasgow Group. The first was at a British Film Institutes seminar, at which Phil Harding, *Panorama* producer, had spoken. He told the Board that the seminar had shown a split between the Glasgow Group and other academics, but said that there had been a feeling nonetheless that 'the BBC had taken a rather high-handed attitude'. He felt that there was a middle ground which was worth exploring.

On another occasion, the Board was told, senior BBC journalists had met with members of the TUC media group. The TUC group, it was reported, had been unable to substantiate their criticisms, and had been 'roundly defeated'. Brenden Barber of the TUC media group told the *NS*:

> If these minutes are genuine, it is extremely disappointing. We went to the meeting looking for a constructive dialogue on serious issues. We did not see it as a battle with winners and losers.

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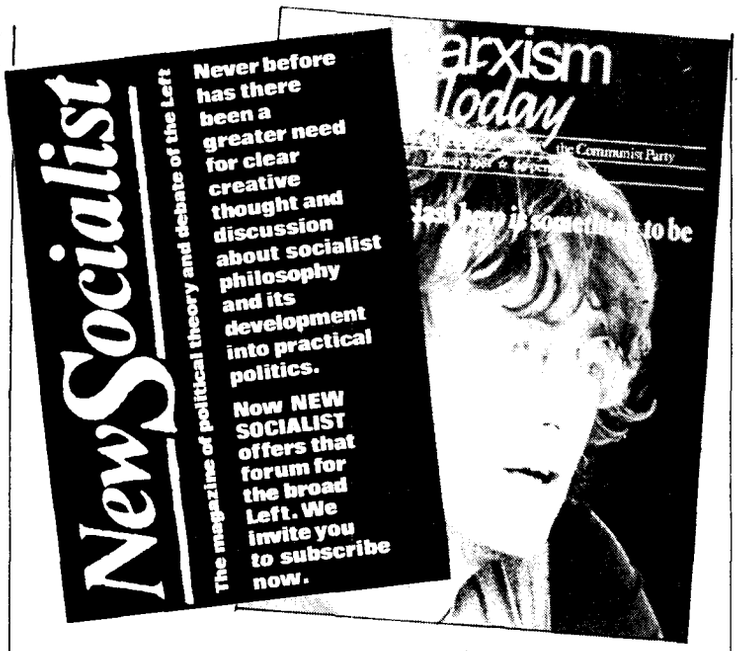
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Charles Landry reports on Labour's new journal and a 'newsy' challenge from the SDP

Ageing parent conceives first theoretical child

ON 1 SEPTEMBER, another new socialist journal — appositely called the *New Socialist* — expects to be born. The ability of the Labour Party, its proud, but aging parent, to conceive its first theoretical child after 80 years is bringing in congratulations all round. Not only do all other major West European socialist parties have theoretical journals but, in Britain, far smaller organisations than the Labour Party do as well. Indeed, it is because the Labour Party has largely been left out of the intellectual fray, which has been dominated by marxist publications, that it is taking this great leap forward.

Of course, the Labour Party has produced journals of its own before; but all of them — *Labour Bulletin, Labour, Labour Forum* and *Fact,* have been house journals produced by the research department. Their function was to sustain the morale and direct the actions of the party activists, and provide them with considered truths as ammunition 'to rout the enemy.' It is the lack of appeal of these predecessors in today's keen competition which has persuaded the Labour Party to go for an outside editor, 36-year-old James Curran, a lecturer in communications.

Curran believes the journal can take off by filling the Party's gap in policy formation, represented by the perennial oscillation between self-righteous moral resolutions and uninspiring pragmatism in practice.

The decision to launch the journal also follows on from the belief that the Labour Party should be able to draw back under its 'umbrella' today's more diverse and intellectually combative socialist movement. The Labour Party should thus be seen as the organisation which sets the questions rather than worries about not having any answers. Some of those questions are on mass unemployment, industrial decline, racism and an alternative to the models of socialism practised in East and West Europe. Those involved in *New Socialist* feel particularly sore that, left to the mass media, Labour Party debates will only be presented as personal slanging matches between MPs.

For connoisseurs of left journalism, this aspiration to carry the debate on a new, democratic socialism, will be familiar. It is, in fact, the success of *Marxism Today* which has been one of the principle goads to Labour Party action, a success which, reflected in its rising circulation, has been twofold. It has managed to get WH Smith to distribute it, with Smith's reporting itself very pleased on how the 'experiment' is going. And it has also resolved the old dichotomy between abstract theory for the intellectuals and uninspired instructions for the rank and file. It has done this by redefining 'theory' as discussion of strategic issues, and it is this view which will be apparent in *New Socialist.*

The launch issue has Lewis Minkin blowing the gaff on an agreement between the BBC and unions not to televise the block vote being used, and further articles by Michele Barratt on feminism and the labour movement, an interview by EP Thompson with Michael Foot on theory, and a debate between Alan Sapper and Denis Healey on the Alternative Economic Strategy. (Spot the missing man.) The whole will apparently be leavened by a fictitious agony column asking the questions that keep lefties awake at night: 'How to win the leadership and remain on top,' and 'How do I get reselected.'

But will competition be enlivened by the new *Social Democrat,* monthly journal of the SDP, being launched (ironically) for the Labour Party conference, with a sales target of 15,000? This one will be 'newsy, not theoretical'. As one SDP spokesman said: 'We might need a discussion magazine on policy later, when we are more sorted out.'

Rob Edwards on new evidence of contamination

Windscale's deadlier dust

RADIOACTIVE CONTAMINATION of the Solway Firth from the Windscale nuclear fuel reprocessing plant in Cumbria is up to 30-times higher than expected, according to the results of three years' research by Dr Richard Scott of Edinburgh University's Molecular Biology Department. The 22 curies of americium 241 — an element of comparable toxicity to plutonium — routinely discharged every year from British Nuclear Fuels' controversial plant now represent almost 0.3 per cent of the amount of caesium 137 emitted. But Dr Scott's analysis of sediment from Auchencairn Bay and surrounding areas on the Galloway coast reveals that the proportion of americium in relation to caesium present has risen to 10 per cent. He attributes this 'disturbing finding' to the possibility that small particles of americium are more easily washed onto the shore. The risk is that some of the contaminated material may be dried out and blown away: one minute particle of americium if inhaled or swallowed bombards sensitive body cells at short range with destructive alpha radiation and can greatly increase the likelihood of cancer (particularly of the lung) or genetic damage.

Dr Scott points out that, if he is right, the National Radiological Protection Board's maximum permissable dosage to the lung of a radiation worker could be contained in 200 grams of sediment: for a member of the public the maximum dosage could be found in as little as 20 grams. If one adds the small quantities of plutonium 239 and 240 which separate government research has shown to be present, and the fact that substantial amounts of another isotope present — plutonium 241 — will after about 20 years decay into americium 241, the amount could fall to less than five grams. Of course, says Dr Scott, there are tons and tons of this stuff lying around.

Scott's measurements have also detected levels of external radioation in sediment up to 15 times higher than natural background levels. He believes that this is primarily due to gamma radiation emitted by the caesium 137 and is a further cause for concern.

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Peter Kellner, Political Editor

Why Mrs Thatcher is a moderate

IF THERE IS one thing on which the Left is agreed — and, come to think of it, it is probably the only idea that is widely shared — it is that the present government is the most reactionary and radically right-wing government Britain has had for about a million years.

When Tony Benn wants to shed his extremist image, he points to all the 'moderate' things he wants to do, such as create more jobs, that 'extremist' Thatcherism can't or won't. When Denis Healey wants to show that he is a true friend of the toiling masses, he reminds you how much better things were when he, rather than Sir Geoffrey Howe, was running the Treasury.

Run your eye down the various ministries — education, health, housing, social security — and the peroration from the opposition benches will generally contain some reference to the narrow-minded dogmas, or laissez-faire doctrines, or outdated ideologies that are propelling Britain towards some kind of divided, right-wing museum-piece society. The greater the ructions on the Left, the more Labour leaders seek to divert us with this apocalyptic vision of the Right.

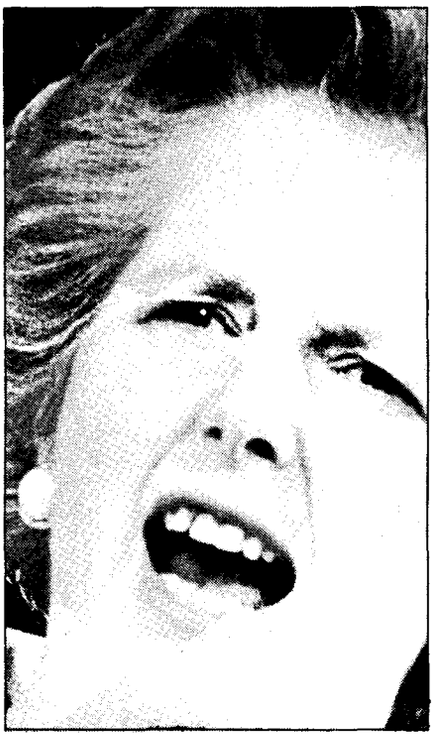
But is it true? A book is published this week that every socialist ought to read. (That is not a kind of recommendation I have made before, and is one I intend to make very, very rarely in future.) It is offputtingly called *Government Policy Initiatives 1979-80: Some case studies in public administration.** Inside is a collection of essays by academic experts, brought together by the Royal Institute of Public Administration, on each of the main domestic policies of the present government.

The cumulative impression that is given — though not, perhaps, intentionally by some of the individual authors — is that the Thatcher government is mean, nasty, cruel, divisive and incompetent — *but not radical.*

HANG ABOUT, wait a moment (I hear you cry), what about the recession, the mounting unemployment, the cutbacks in the welfare state, the whole disastrous monetarist shooting match — if that isn't a radical right-wing government for you, what on earth is?

The answer to this lies in the distinction that should be drawn between *bad* government and *doctrinaire* government. Thatcher's is far more of the first and far less of the second than the Left usually supposes.

Consider the recession. It has been largely brought about by the application of monetarist policies, agreed? Good. Now monetarism has been adopted by the Right, but is not in itself a right-wing idea, any more than 'Keynesian' demand management is inherently left-wing. It would not be difficult to devise 'monetarist' policies that produced more left-wing results than the last Labour government, or 'Keynesian' policies that produced more right-wing results than the present Tory one.



Monetarism is a technique, not a doctrine. The right-wing doctrines that monetarism is supposed to aid are a) a switch in power and income from workers to employers, and b) a switch in power and income from the public to the private sectors of the economy.

Judged by these doctrinal objectives, monetarist policies have not merely failed; they have secured exactly the opposite results. As the national cake diminishes, consumption has held up far better than company profits; and public expenditure has risen, not fallen, as a proportion of gross domestic product.

As Professor Peter Jackson of Leicester University shows in the book's opening chapter, the government has even failed to do anything useful to unleash the much-vaunted talents of the private capitalist:

> Despite its rhetoric, the government has done little to restore incentives and to aid structural adjustments on the supply side of the economy.

In each succeeding chapter the failures of the government, *judged by its own ideology* are remorselessly catalogued.

- While the growth in the number of public employees has been halted, the *share* of the nation's jobs in the public sector has continued to rise, because of the dramatic job losses in the private sector.
- The government's attitude towards local authorities is all at sea. In opposition it favoured giving them more freedom, but in government has acted arbitrarily to limit that freedom — witness Heseltine's threat to withdraw money from 'overspending' councils.
- Attempts to 'privatise' the public sector have had only a few marginal successes. In particular, plans to sell shares in, and diminish control over, the British National Oil Corporation have been shelved. Elsewhere aid to nationalised industries has actually increased. And, as Wyn Grant of Warwick University observes:

> Mrs Thatcher's government seems to have made less radical changes in the provision of assistance to private industry or in provision for mixed public-private enterprises than the Heath government did in its first eighteen months in office.

- Rodney Morgan of Bath University shows that Tory policies on law and order are doing nothing to help diminish crime, and 'may well exacerbate' the strains on prisons. True, more police are being recruited: but, Morgan maintains, the type of policing rather than the number of policemen influences the level of crime — and 'such operational issues are seldom the subject of ministerial statement'.
- The health service has suffered as a result of public spending cuts, and the Tories propound 'a philosophy which is radical in its repudiation of the consensus which tended to shape policies in previous decades', writes Professor Rudolf Klein of Bath University; all the same

> the Conservative policy initiatives . . . in office are likely to be marginal in terms of their impact on the inherited pattern of policies and institutions.

AND SO IT goes on. Many people have suffered under this government, but more because its techniques of economic management have proved disastrous than because of the acting out of a reactionary dream. Thus council house building has almost come to a halt — but private housebuilding has also been hit.

None of this should be taken to mean that the Tories would not *like* to be more right-wing: their attitudes to, say, using rates to send selected children to private schools, prove otherwise.

Rather, the point is that while it is relatively easy to damage Britain's economic and social structures, it is damnably hard to reshape them. The Butskellite consensus, it transpires, has a life of its own, and does not need the consent of mere politicians to survive. For symmetrically opposite reasons it is required for politicians of both Right and Left to maintain that the consensus dragon has been slain; the depressing truth, however, is that the dragon has survived. And if the Left doesn't hoist that aboard, then when (or if) it wins the next election, it will be in dead trouble.

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Our poison, their profit

The big supermarket chains can exert considerable power over what we eat. More than half their own products are bad for us. HANNAH WRIGHT investigates.

'THERE CAN BE no long-term divergence of interest', says the official report on the labelling of food[1], 'between consumers and the food trade — whatever short-term disagreements may arise.' Careful felllows these report writers. Note the use of the word 'interest' — not 'priority' or 'need': it suggests banks and shareholders, conveying discreetly the idea of food being processed and packaged in the interest of interest, rather than a cultural ideal of good food, still less good nutrition.

The consumer's interest can be largely financial too. Assessing food by its financial value while clinging to a repetitive round of sterile security foods is so much easier on the old brain cells than choosing foods which please not only the eye and palate, but also the heart, mind, stomach and bowels. And choosing implies choice — ah, now there's a word to conjure with. Who actually chooses the food from which we choose? The answer for at least half the population is the small army of buyers who work for supermarkets and small chain groceries. In fact, their influence extends well beyond their 50 per cent share of the market, since they effectively dictate what the manufacturers produce.

There are probably around 200 buyers working for the supermarkets, each responsible for a particular group of products. However, the butter buyer for Tesco's and the savoury snack selector for Marks & Spencer (to name but two) are chiefly concerned with profit margins, delivery dates and customer appeal. They are experts in buying, not nutrition. Indeed, Marks & Spencer switch their buyers from one department to another all the time, thus guaranteeing that the product is secondary to the system. Knowing little about genuine quality in food, buyers are subject to a kind of marketeers' consensus about what is a good product. Manufacturers must fit in or go bust. 'Only Heinz, Cadbury and Kellogg can afford to cock a snook at the supermarkets', said a small-time producer, who wished to remain anonymous. 'I wouldn't like Tesco to hear I'd been discussing them.'

At this point we all board a big, unhealthy merry-go-round. Buyers ensure that food which has sold well in the past goes on being manufactured; they are loath, because of interest of the financial kind, to venture far from the beaten track of customer habit. Having little incentive to change their habits, consumers continue to buy their accustomed high fat, high salt, low fibre, high sugar and highly dangerous foods week after week, year after year.

THE FOOD TRADERS cannot pretend ignorance. Their own British Nutrition Foundation (funded by themselves) has just published an article by Professor Stewart Truswell of Sydney University's Department of Human Nutrition. Entitled *Coronary Heart Disease: How Much More Evidence Do We Need?*, it points out that studies in more than 20 countries, including Britain, have repeatedly demonstrated

> that the three big risk factors are high plasma total Cholesterol [which comes from a high saturated fat intake], cigarette smoking and high arterial blood pressure [related to high salt intake].[2]

The Flour Advisory Bureau (a sort of PR agency for millers and bakers) has a pamphlet which quotes the Department of Health's report on cereals:

> Evidence from clinical and epidemiological studies suggests that an increase in the intake of cereal fibre would lead to decreased morbidity and mortality from some diseases of the large bowel and would relieve constipation.

Professional nutritionists divide roughly into two camps. The conservatives, who include just about anyone connected with the food industry and, alas, most hospital dieticians, are concerned with a 'balanced diet', containing average amounts of protein, vitamins, sugar, fat and starch. The radicals consider this a neat way of avoiding the real problem, which is over-consumption of processed food. Once food has had its fibre removed, and salt, sugar, saturated fat, flavourings and preservatives added, it slowly rots the body — and government should intervene to discourage its sale.

How much do consumers know? Last year, BBC's Radio Four *Food Programme* surveyed 1,000 listeners and viewers. It was found that 60 per cent of men and a similar percentage of older people thought that white bread was better for you because it looked and tasted nicer. Upper income groups knew that wholemeal bread was better, but only three per cent knew about wheatgerm. Over a quarter of all young people thought that sugar was protein; 45 per cent of men had never heard of saturated fat or its role in heart disease. And although 61 per cent of women wanted calories on labels, 50 per cent of men did not, and one person thought a calorie was a Swedish meatball. At least a majority knew that vitamin C came in oranges: better than a slap in the eye with a Cadbury's Creme Egg, but not exactly a broad data base on which to build a healthy, energetic mind and body. 'Ninety-nine-point-nine per cent of the British really know nothing about nutrition,' confirms Mr G. Amery, Chief Food Chemist of the Co-operative Wholesale Society. So what responsibility do the supermarkets have for the nutritional quality of the food they sell; and is it in their 'interest' to take any responsibility at all?

DR LARS OKHOLM is the chief food chemist of the Danish Co-operative, FDB/Brugsen, the largest food retailer in Denmark. 'One day it will be easy to recognise our customers', he says, 'they will look healthier than other people's.' Since 1968 he has gradually introduced a range of own-brand products, according to his own 'mini-risk' policy. The risk to be mini-ed is that to health. 'If there is a substantive presumption that a product is harmful, then we provide an alternative, which must not cost more.' He began with baby foods, which have half the entire market, and has built up more than 200 alternative products from sausages and biscuits to soft drinks and tomato ketchup. All these have low sugar, low salt, low fat, minimum additives, no added colours or flavours, high fibre and high water. ('Vat most Danes need to eat much more of is Vater.') Our own Mr Amery points out that some of Dr Okholm's products would be unsaleable in Britain, because they would contravene regulations. For example, his liver paste contains 34 per

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cent of pork stock (water); in Britain the amount of harmless water is controlled, although the amount of harmful fat is not.

UK regulations which govern the composition of named foods, as well as labelling and additives, are devised by the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food. Its Food Standards Committee has only one nutritionist, Dr Philip James. Four members are from the food trade and agriculture, and the team is completed by a home economist, a public analyst and a fair trading standards inspector. It is bad enough that our key food committee is organised by the Ministry which looks after the interests of food producers and traders; but to have only one member with nutritional and medical knowledge is quite mad and against the interests of us all.

Dr Philip James, who also heads the Dunn Clinical Nutrition Centre in Cambridge, maintains that all packeted foods should have nutritional labelling, showing proportions of saturated and unsaturated fat, carbohydrate with a separate listing for sugar, and fibre.

> Most people would like to have protein listed, though it isn't really necessary. As far as minerals go, it may well be useful to list potassium and sodium — not just salt, or manufacturers will tend to use MSG [monosodium glutamate] instead. Other trace minerals are undoubtedly important, but are not likely to be included in the next three to five years.

Dr Okholm has worked out his own nutritional labelling along much the same lines.

AS CAUSES OF DEGENERATIVE disease, additives rank far below such natural substances (not to mention coffee and alcohol) and certainly a pinch of preservative beats a dose of botulism. But there are still far, far too many permitted additives in Britain. They are supposedly included in foods out of 'technological necessity', but they are really there because they are cheaper and easier than refrigeration and fast turnover.

Only people born within the last 20 years have been exposed to the full blast of additives. Increasing reports of children with hyperactivity and other learning difficulties (20,000 enquiries to the new Hyperactive Children's Support Group) do not bode well for their long-term effects. It is known that very young children ingest three times as much food per kilo of body weight as do adults, and their delicate bodies are therefore far more affected: thus, baby foods aren't allowed additives (other than sugar and salt!). However, babies and toddlers are often given bread, biscuits and soft drinks containing adult doses of additives.

Colours derived from coal tar are the most suspect. Since 1973, one third have been struck off the permitted list, some due to our entry into the EEC, others to toxicological findings. Bill Ward, who works for a big additives firm, says you can tell colours are dodgy because there is so little agreement between the permitted lists of different countries — and new reports of dubious findings are published frequently. Next for the chop looks like tartrazine, a bright orange used in soft drinks, confectionery and many other foods. (Flour confectionery is exempted from ingredient listing regulations.) Unlike the US and most other European countries, British food labelling regulations permit the use of generic terms such as 'preservative' or 'colour', rather than insisting on the exact name or EEC-permitted number.

Peter Davies of Sainsbury says that when his firm took the bright green colour out of their own-brand peas there was a terrific adverse reaction, and they have recently decided to put the red dye erythrosine back into sausages: 'It is anticipated that all our sausages will eventually have added colour . . . colour does enhance the appearance of the product.' Enhancement is, of course, in the eye of the beholder and the Norwegians, whose meat products have had colour banned for several years, find bright pink no enhancement to sausages at all.

Just about all the supermarkets in Britain do some very high quality own-brands: Waitrose's fruit canned in apple juice, for instance, Marks & Spencer's chickens bred without antibiotics and their sell-out-same-day policy, and Sainsbury's new low-fat fresh milk and their 85 per cent extraction white bread. But only Safeway has a section devoted to wholefood and health food products, and none has even tried to convert popular products such as tomato ketchup and soft drinks into genuinely nutritious foods.

FROM THE PRODUCT LISTS provided by the supermarkets, we have worked out that 36 per cent of own-brands contain at least one-tenth sugar. 'Not many people dispute that sugar is a major cause of tooth decay', writes Sainsbury's nutritionist Jenny Salmon in the firm's food guide, *Balancing Your Diet*. 'A high sugar intake is associated with a high rate of the [heart] disease . . . cutting out sugar of all kinds will cut calories without reducing any valuable nutrition.'

Ms Salmon is equally firm about fibre: 'It is certain that dietary fibre has a definite effect on constipation and cures the symptoms in most cases of diverticular disease.' The controversy about cholesterol still rages, but fats in general and saturated fats in particular are eaten to excess by most of us. Foods which are high in salt, particularly bacon and ham, are universally considered a bad thing because of the close relationship between salt, high blood pressure and heart disease. Dr Frank Fairweather, Principal Medical Officer at the Department of Health, is this month at the Massachusetts

Labelling contrast

Note the nutritional breakdown on the Danish Co-op's blackcurrant juice, with 'sukker' given separately at seven per cent. Sainsbury's equivalent is rich in vitamin C but richer in sugar, as you find out only if you know that ingredients have to be listed in descending order by weight. As for the words 'Health Drink', used by Safeway and the British Co-op as well as Sainsbury's, in this sugar-loaded country, with shops full of cheap vitamin C-containing foods such as cabbage and potatoes, this is quite simply a lie. Dr Okholm's tomato ketchup has seven per cent sugar and no flavouring or preservative, while the average British own-brand contains about 22.9 per cent; Waitrose adds a flavouring agent.

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The Big League

Supermarket	Sales (£millions)	Profit
Co-op	1,972	—
Tesco	1,602	55
Sainsbury	1,226	46
Asda	999	50
Allied Suppliers	672	—
Fitch Lovell	602	11
Fine Fare	540	—
Marks & Spencer	521	—
International Stores	498	(3.4 loss)
Safeway	336	12
Kwiksave	334	15
Linfood	307	—
Waitrose	260	—

Thirteen largest food retailers in the UK. It's a high-volume, low-margin business, with profit only a small part of every £1 worth of sales. But return on capital is extremely high. In the case of Kwiksave, for example, shareholders receive a 50 per cent return on the investment they have made in fixed assets (i.e. stores), while Tesco shareholders get a 29 per cent return. All figures are for the year ended 1980, except Co-op and International Stores, whose figures are for 1979. Fitch Lovell's include some income from non-retailing interests. Where profit figures are not available, food retailing is part of a larger interest and not itemised separately.

Institute of Technology, checking work which appears to prove the long-suspected link between stomach cancer and nitrates used in bacon curing. When all these dangerous products are added to the 36 per cent of sugary ones, we find that more than 50 per cent of own-brands sold by British supermarkets are detrimental to good nutrition.

By contrast, about 32 per cent are good for us (although even some of these are a bit doubtful): fresh fruit and vegetables; fresh meat, fish, offal, eggs, cheese, low-sugar yoghurt and milk; unsaturated fats and oils; dried fruit and unsalted nuts; pulses, whole grains and products made from them; frozen vegetables, fruit, meat, fish and poultry; canned poultry, fish, vegetables and fruit canned in natural juices; and fresh fruit juices. That leaves less than 20 per cent (including baked beans, packet soups and cream) which are neither good nor bad. Safeway came out a clear winner in both the low percentage of foods with sugar and the high percentage of nutritionally good foods.

If a product is displayed prominently at eye level at the entrance to a supermarket, it can sell nearly four times more than it would if stuck away in a corner. The racks of child-height confectionery near the check-out desks are an especially cynical example of this kind of manipulation. Safeway have a large fruit and vegetable display right at the entrance to their stores, while some other supermarkets have them in a corner where you wouldn't necessarily go. Floor display allocation is a closely guarded secret, but it seems that no supermarket other than Marks & Spencer gives more than 20 per cent of floor space to fresh foods. However, Marks & Spencer's goods, although very fresh and well-made, consist mainly of products that are either high-sugar, low-fibre, high-salt or high in saturated fats.

Tesco's senior economist Carey Dennis told me proudly that Tesco were increasing their range of fresh foods. On further inquiry it turned out she meant their newly-launched range of pork pies and sausages. What the British need like a hole in the head are more high-saturated-fat, refined-carbohydrate, coloured, salted, preserved foods such as pork pies. Tesco have recently set up consumer advisory kitchens in a few of their large stores, where own-brands are tried out. The customer is given three to choose from — on taste and appearance alone. What are human beings coming to that they should allow themselves to be used like golden retrievers choosing Pedigree Chum? 'Price, taste and appearance are not good guides to nutritional value', writes Jenny Salmon in *Balancing Your Diet.* Carey Dennis is not in favour of explicit naming of additives on labels: she thinks it would be 'off-putting' to customers.

WHAT IS NEEDED is more education, not secrecy. Tesco provide dietary fact sheets, talk to seven and eight-year-olds about food shopping and give school leavers advice about budgeting and shopping in a large supermarket. This smacks of trying to train up life-long Tesco customers, but I am sure there are good intentions. The Co-op have an educational section, though not specifically about nutrition, and Sainsbury's, in addition to *Balancing Your Diet,* have done a pamphlet on packed lunches and are about to produce another on special diets. In all these attempts there is a lack of integrity. The right hand offers the useful booklet, while the left stocks the shelves with high sugar, high fat, high salt, high profit goodies. Only Mr Amery of the Co-op squared up to the problem:

> If you think we are going to stop stocking confectionery and chocolates because they are bad for people, well we're not. The turnover on these items is, say, £1,000 million per year. That means £50 million profit. If we lost £50 million profit there'd be no more Co-op and everyone else would be selling just as many sweets as before.

Five minutes with Daisy Hyams, Tesco buyer

The Co-op have a committee of representatives from all 190 societies, discussing (among other things) nutritional labelling. Sainsbury's Jenny Salmon wants labelling of a limited and particular kind. She is also consultant nutritionist to Bird's Eye and was responsible for starting their labelling — which lists protein, fat, carbohydrates and calories, and no more. She is against the US system, where all foods which make nutritional claims must have detailed labelling, with Vitamins A, B1, B2, B3, C, calcium, iron, fat and calories declared, plus all additives as well as recommended daily doses in a specified serving (this, however, leaves out sugar, salt, fibre and saturated fat). What Jenny Salmon hopes is that the Food and Drink Industries Council's Labelling Committee, of which she is a member, will put forward recommendations along the Bird's Eye lines, which will become a voluntary code of practice for manufacturers.

IT IS REMARKABLE how many people connected with the food trade want to keep things secret from the consumer. Mr Sudthall, Chief Food Chemist of Safeway, is against nutritional labelling: 'Spoil the mandarin oranges, all that stuff about potassium.' Sainsbury's bakers looped the loop when told that they might have to declare the calorie content per slice: 'No-one will buy it when they know how many calories are in it.' Even the composition of processed foods such as baked beans is governed by secret codes of practice. But Dr Philip James, the sole nutritionist on the Food Standards Committee wants enforceable regulations.

The British public are relatively incurious, which doesn't help matters. Gordon Baxter, of Royal Game Soup fame, recently tangled with an official from the US Food and Drugs Administration, who told him that if he wished to have a photograph of the ingredients of his Scotch Broth on the label, they would have to be pictured in strict proportion, as they appeared in the soup — with water occupying 70 per cent of the photo. 'Or else,' the official explained, 'some nut from Kansas City will ring me up and make trouble.' It would be an unusual British civil servant who made a decision on the basis of what some nut in Oldham might say, even supposing the Oldham nut could find out which civil servant was responsible and make contact.

Many of the manufacturers claim to be disappointed by the supermarket buyers' lack of interest in quality, and say that the pressure to keep prices down is paramount: 'They say, give us a bigger discount or you'll lose your shelf space.' None of them will speak on record, except Gordon Baxter, who declared:

> Supermarkets should give much more thought to the nutritional value and quality of a product before they decide to sell it. The chief chemist should have real power and authority and a seat on the main board.

Daisy Hyams, chief buyer for Tesco, gave me five minutes of her time. What happens in the States, she said, generally happens here in time. 'But it would have to be one product at a time, very expensive and very slow.'

Some American supermarkets have 'point of purchase' labels, where shelves are ticketed with information such as 'high sugar' and 'low salt'. Denmark's Dr Okholm agrees that it is 'unrealistic to think that consumers can work out dietary risk factors for themselves.' But Bob Stephens, Senior Technical Manager of Marks & Spencer, says that nutritional labelling has often been used to promote foods which have a poor nutritional image, such as breakfast cereals, and he is dead against it: 'Marks & Spencer is not a nanny to the public.'

What we need is a strong regulatory body which will force food traders in general and supermarkets in particular to take the nutritional value of their products far, far more seriously. But it will also be necessary for consumers to be sufficiently educated to ask for the right products. So let us begin with information, so that we can make the right choice. And for God's sake, let us stop behaving like golden retrievers, and use our intelligence to decide not only our interests, but our needs. □

1. Second Report on the Labelling of Food, HMSO, 1979, paragraph 27.
2. Nutrition Bulletin 32, British Nutrition Foundation.

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INFLATION

Godleyism is not enough

ANDREW TYLECOTE on the Cambridge school's fatal flaw

PROFESSOR WYNNE GODLEY looks set to become the new Keynes. From his Cambridge fortress he and others in the Department of Applied Economics have been telling us for years now where orthodox policies would lead us — much the same orthodox policies of free trade, overvaluation and deflation as Keynes inveighed against — and their forecasts of falling output and rising unemployment have been proved chillingly accurate.

When only one doctor has been able to predict the course of the disease, it is difficult not to start taking an interest in his prescription. Godley's is so outrageous to the orthodox that, like Keynes's prescription 50 years ago, it will not be followed until they can simply see nothing else to do.

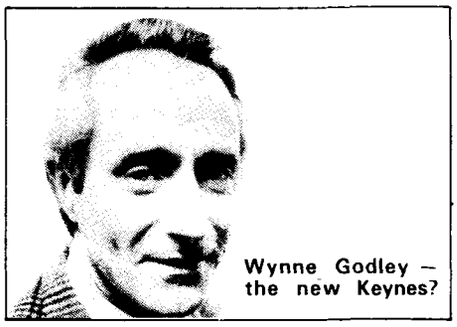
Once they have proved for themselves what Godley told them — the futility of repeated deflation in chase of a balanced budget — they will have no option but to reflate. Once they have so far crippled British industry that imports exceed exports even in a slump, the pound will fall — as Godley had said it must. Once they have found that such a devaluation (as Godley predicted) cannot by itself repair the damage to the balance of payments, they will have no option but to hold down imports by any means available — Godley's import controls. And so Godley's advice, which if followed five, even two years ago, might have had excellent results, will be taken in desperate emergency to stave off catastrophe.

It is a cruel test of any policy, and of the theory behind it, to resort to it in the most difficult possible circumstances. Any little flaw, which might otherwise have done little to impede its success, may turn into a crucial weakness. Professor Godley's little flaw concerns wages, and through wages, inflation; and through inflation, his whole strategy.

He has himself shown that UK prices, in the aggregate, do not respond significantly to the level of UK demand: other things being equal, they will rise no faster in a boom than in a slump. The other things that are equal must of course include wages. Here again, Godley argues, the level of demand has little if any effect. In fact, in the longer term, the effect of higher demand is to *reduce* inflation because people's living standards will rise and that will reduce the frustration which causes pressure for large increases in money wages.

THERE IS CERTAINLY something in this view. The old theories of wages being determined by the forces of supply and demand in the labour market are obviously bunk, and not the less bunk for being dressed up in monetarist mumbo jumbo. When we are deciding what to put in their place, we have to give some importance to the degree of frustration over living standards.

But workers, even unionised ones, are not, as my children would put it, bionic. They cannot just help themselves to whatever they feel entitled to. They have to *win* it from employers, who can put up very effective resistance when it suits them. As I show in *The Causes of the Present Inflation**, it suits employers particularly well to resist, at the beginning of a sharp recession, and when the currency is severely overvalued. Their *concession costs* — the costs of giving in — are high, resistance costs low.



Wynne Godley — the new Keynes?

Now look at their position in the early years of the 'Godley recovery'. Having reduced their capacity, they will now be trying to increase their output — so they will be selling their production as fast as they can turn it out, and working at full stretch. Any stoppage means a loss of sales, with no chance to make them up later. So their resistance costs will be high. But devaluation will have restored their profit margins — and what's worse, the import controls give them a protected home market, where cost increases can be easily passed on to the customer. So their concession costs are low. The result? 'What are they asking for, Joe? Oh let them have it. Anything for a quiet life.'

What is Godley's response to this problem? He used to play it down: workers had a 'normal negotiating target' of about 3 per cent per year increase in real take-home pay, which they could get without inflation, as soon as his policies had led to fast growth. For a year or two, until we were back to that happy state, governments should use incomes policy to keep wages under control. It would be a temporary policy, to overcome a temporary problem. The main thing was not to expect 'incomes policy . . . for too long to keep the real value of wage settlements below what appears to be the normal negotiating target.' (*Cambridge Economic Policy Review*, April 1979, p.32)

But by this spring their ideas had shifted. Godley *et al* now admit that 'wage bargaining objectives are evidently not immune to economic pressures' — the real value of wage settlements is falling, even without incomes policy.

The problem for Cambridge now is this. What goes down, in deep recession, will come back right up, in Godley-style reflation. What will happen in a private sector firm if you try to impose an incomes policy on it in such circumstances? The shop stewards will have a little chat with the foremen, or the works manager — warn them they'll have trouble meeting that production deadline if they aren't helpful — and something will be fiddled, on bonus or regrading or

Contd on p.10

A COUPLE of issues ago, beginning a *Who's Really Who* of the Civil Service mandarinate, we mentioned a couple of star performers in the Oilgate scandal. Of course, we mustn't forget that this had its private enterprise side as well.

One of the chief purposes of a *Who's Really Who* is to keep tabs on folk in the years after their notoriety: did they suffer from their villainies, or (as is more usual) profit? The dust having settled, the oil sanctions affair seems to have been an example of the latter process.

DE BRUYNE, Dirk. Dutch citizen, Chairman of the Committee of Managing Directors, Royal Dutch Shell Group. Born 1920, graduated as an economist. Shell service since WW2, Indonesia, London, Europe etc. Regional Co-ordinator for Africa, 1965-8; Managing Director for Africa 1972-6. Meeting with Rhodesian civil servants, 8 October 1965 was treated by Ian Smith (qv) as a crucial reassurance that oil supplies would be guaranteed after UDI. Further visit November 1966. Just before oil companies' meeting with British minister, George (Lord) Thomson (qv) declared that the 'time has come to resist very strongly any further pressures from HMG to take any action in regard to Rhodesian sanctions.' Admitted, 1973, that 'of course we are supplying customers, who are sending oil to Rhodesia.'

1976: Appointed Knight in the Order of the Netherlands Lion.

1979: Appointed head of Shell Group.

MILNE, Denys ('Tiny'). Retired oil executive. Born 1926, educated Epsom Coll. & Oxford. War service in RAF, joined BP from Colonial Service, 1955. Chairman, BP South Africa, 1971-5.

1974: Commissioned preparation of report stating that Rhodesian supplies were 'effected from South Africa primarily through Freight Services (see John Francis, qv) buying product from BP and Shell SA'. He stated to the Bingham Inquiry that he was anxious to preserve BP's share of the Rhodesian market 'irrespective of politics, and one might say law, the fact is here was a piece of business . . . and my concern was to get my half in my name so that nobody could touch it.'

Appointed Chief Executive of BP, 1976; retired this year. 1981: Director of South Africa Foundation, which promotes the image of the South African regime overseas.

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overtime. Head office won't hear more than is good for it — it won't be too nosey if it wants the output — and the Department of Employment will hear even less. The people who *will* hear will be workers in other firms — the news will be round the pubs in no time — and they'll be next in the queue. Soon everyone will be pressing against the limits and the policy will break down.

GODLEY'S MISTAKE is not so much to overrate incomes policy as to underrate the pressures with which it would have to cope. The more of the economy this government destroys, the longer and harder the recovery will be. Along that road, we cannot expect workers who hold all the cards for the first time in years — years in which many of them have suffered the hardship and humiliation of short-time and unemployment — to pass up the chance of a big increase in wages. A temporary incomes policy will not be enough to hold the line; something must be done to maintain the employers' bargaining power over wages.

The theory points to the solution: first, employers' *concession* costs must be kept up. That can only be done by the use of *price* controls in a way that the Heath government flirted with: price ceilings are to be calculated and set on the assumption that the incomes limit will be respected. If you evade it, hard luck for you — you must pay the extra out of profits (or out of extra efficiency, if you can get it; a 'normal' increase in efficiency will be assumed when the price ceiling is calculated). Such a system, if properly enforced, puts management's back to the wall: it has to say no, or be squeezed between rising wages and immovable prices.

There is, of course, the danger that the unions will not appreciate the new situation, and will strike, regardless. They have to understand management's position. Some form of profit-sharing and worker participation must be forced through at the double. With a stake in the firm's prosperity, and some understanding of its situation, workers will not press hard for excessive wage increases. Concession costs up, resistance costs down — the line would hold.

That is all Godley and the Godleians lack: an understanding of how bargaining power affects wages, and should affect policy. If they will take that on board, they have an adequate analysis, and a sufficient solution, and I will follow them joyfully as they lead us out of the wilderness in the years after 1984. □

* Published by Macmillan, £20.

BOXING

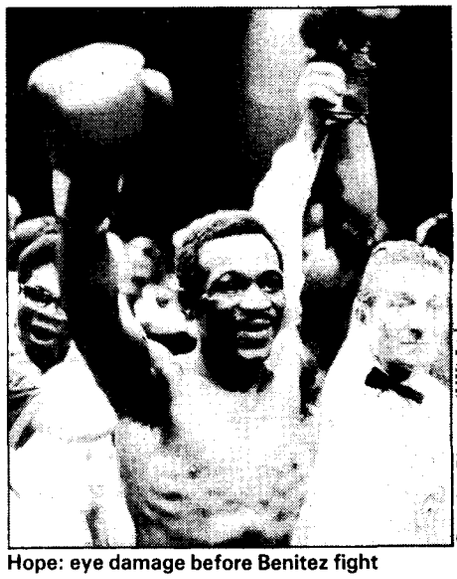
What kept Hope in the ring

DENIS LEHANE reports on the pressures to continue fighting

MILLIONS OF BRITISH television viewers saw the Hackney-based boxer Maurice Hope lying unconscious on the canvas of the ring in Las Vegas on Saturday night 23 May. Hope, a black West Indian immigrant, had seconds earlier lost his World Boxing Council (WBC) world light middleweight title in the most decisive way possible. He had been knocked out by the challenger, Wilfredo Benitez. For more than seven minutes after the final crushing blow, Hope lay on the canvas, his only movements the involuntary twitching of his body. It was a sickening sight, and one which the television director chose to dwell upon for only a few seconds.

The fear within that ring was that Hope had suffered serious brain damage — a fear made all the more real by the memory of John Owen from Wales, who suffered serious brain damage in a world title fight in Los Angeles a year ago and died from his injuries. Unlike Owen, Hope recovered consciousness in the ring and walked back to the dressing room.

Hope *did* suffer brain damage that night in the ring. He was rendered unconscious by a powerful blow on his jaw, which concussed his brain. When he regained consciousness he was asked if he knew where he was and he replied 'London'. In his dressing-room his speech was markedly slurred, and he was sent to hospital. These are all symptoms of brain damage. The doctors who examined Hope could detect no sign of it being permanent, but this does not mean that Hope was given a clean bill of health by the doctors. All that can be said at present is that Hope did not suffer an acute brain injury such as a brain haemorrhage. But only time will tell if he has suffered long-term brain damage.



Sporting Pictures (UK) Ltd

Hope: eye damage before Benitez fight

Serious doubts exist as to whether Hope should have been allowed to fight at all. For in February last year, already world champion and in training to defend his title, he suffered a serious injury to his right eye. His retina became detached, and only immediate surgery saved the sight of that eye. The operation was carried out by the experienced surgeon Mr David McLeod at Moorfields Eye Hospital in London, one of the top centres for eye injury and disease. Using a newly developed laser technique, Hope's retina was reattached.

Hitherto, an injury of this type had meant the instant end of a boxing career, and doctors inside Moorfield took this view. Their initial advice to Hope and his family was that he should not box ever again because of the risk of further damage to his eye. How then, was it possible for Hope to be in that ring in Las Vegas to receive his beating from Benitez?

Mr McLeod the surgeon had reversed his earlier position. He was placed in a very difficult position. The new laser surgery techniques are a major advance and, in theory, the reattached retina is even less likely to become detached than that of his undamaged left eye. The decision to tell Hope not to fight again was, rather, based on prudence and common sense.

Against this, Mickey Duff, the ubiquitous promoter/matchmaker/manager and Hope's manager, long-time Duff associate Terry Lawless, argued strongly that Hope, as a West Indian immigrant with no alternative trade, would end up in the gutter if his boxing career were prematurely halted. Duff and Lawless explained that he was penniless, but if he could have a few more fights, he could retire with a fortune to tide him over for the rest of his life. Faced with this stark choice, the doctors gave in. Had the patient been a white man with a university degree and a professional skill, it is clear that the decision would not have been reversed.

In Hope's case, the question had become not 'why should we let him box?' but 'how can we justify ending his career?' He defended his title successfully once more before he fought Benitez, but there continue to be profound doubts within boxing and the medical profession about a boxer fighting after serious eye surgery.

Why did not the British Boxing Board of Control, which nominally regulates professional boxing in this country, choose the side of caution and withdraw Hope's licence to fight after the operation? In the past 13 months, Hope, Conteh, Green, Mwale and Owen have all left these shores for world title fights in the United States where they have been comprehensively destroyed. Owen died, and Green and Hope suffered such devastating knock-outs that it was feared they might die. The common thread between all these fights is Mickey Duff, who made all the matches, and the British Boxing Board of Control which approved them.

The reason Duff took all these fighters abroad to meet their destruction was money, and big money was to be made in fights against US-based world champions. Professional boxing today is big money, and Duff is a major world power in the game. With his associates Harry Levene and Mike Barrett, Duff has a virtual monopoly of big-time professional boxing in this country. The Board's almost sole source of income comes from commission on boxing matches here. Thus any action by the Board which curtailed the activities of the Duff clique, or which drove them abroad (a real possibility with today's satellite communications) would directly affect the Board's finances.

The Board exists to protect boxers and the sport of professional boxing. That was what it was set up to do 52 years ago. The decision to let Maurice Hope fight on after his eye injury was wrong for Hope because of the genuine fears for his health. The news that Moorfield's initially told Hope never to box

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again will come as a surprise almost certainly to most, if not all, members of the Board. That is not an excuse for them. It is well known in the boxing world that an eye injury of Hope's kind normally ends a boxer's career.

Today it is unclear whether the injury had a bearing on his defeat by Benitez. We do know that Hope had never suffered such a beating before and that Benitez was regarded as a classy boxer who lacked a big punch. The Board's decision was also wrong for boxing, and once again shows how little regard the Board as it is presently constituted has for its own regulations and duties.

The Board has become a rubber stamp for Duff and his associates. There is no longer any point in asking the question 'how many more mistakes can they afford to make?' There seem to be no end to the mistakes. Something should be done about them, because they are clearly unable to do anything about themselves. □

IMMIGRATION

X-ray checks condemned

PHIL COHEN looks at new evidence of a dangerous practice

THE GOVERNMENT'S case for continuing the controversial practice of X-raying immigrant children in the Indian sub-continent for the purpose of age assessment is dramatically undermined by a new report released this week. This says even low dosages of radiation from these X-rays can cause cancers in children. It cites top medical opinion to show that X-rays are inaccurate and unreliable for determining the ages of children. And it points out that scientific studies relied on by medical advisers in the sub-continent who are supervising these X-rays often contradict each other; some are over 40 years old, are based on very small samples and have been largely discredited by later research.

The new 21-page report, *The Use of X-rays for Age Determination in Immigration Control*, was produced by researcher Ted White of Yale University for Lord Avebury, Liberal spokesman for race relations and immigration, and chairman of the Parliamentary Human Rights Group. The Liberal peer is a member of an ad hoc campaign committee which wants X-rays of children for administrative purposes stopped immediately and which opposes the general tenor of the Yellowlees report on medical testing of immigrants published by the government last December.

In the appendix of that report, Dr John Evans of the DHSS says that it is necessary to know children's ages to verify the identity of dependants entering the UK, and concludes 'that the use of X-rays of the bony skeleton provides a useful, fairly accurate and acceptably safe way of estimating the age of children when it is important to do so.' He recommends that X-rays for age purposes should not be used for adults over 21 as they were 'not particularly useful', but declares that where children are concerned:

> Provided proper shielding is used in accordance with normal radiological practice, the radiation dose to the parts X-rayed is minimal, and the scatter gonadal dose is insignificant.

The counter-report quotes Karl Z. Morgan, past chairman of the National Council on Radiation Protection and of the International Commission for Radiological Protection. He says there is no safe level of exposure and no dose of radiation so low that the risk of a malignancy is zero. He says there is never complete repair of cells bombarded by radiation. The report refers to other studies which show that children have a higher risk of dying from radiation-induced leukemia than do middle-aged persons. Because of these risks the World Health Organisation has condemned the use of X-rays for administrative purposes. The British Medical Association passed a motion in 1979 calling for a ban on them as 'unethical', while the code of practice of the DHSS says: 'It it important that only those radiological examinations and treatments that are necessary should be requested.'

The medical techniques which are used were in fact designed to evaluate physical maturity, not chronological age. They were developed in the USA and Britain, and normally based on X-rays of the hand and wrist where the risks are thought to be lower. According to the Yellowlees report, accuracy in estimating real age by these methods is 'of the order of plus or minus six months.' However, on 18 February this year, government minister Baroness Young said in the Lords that accuracy falls with age:

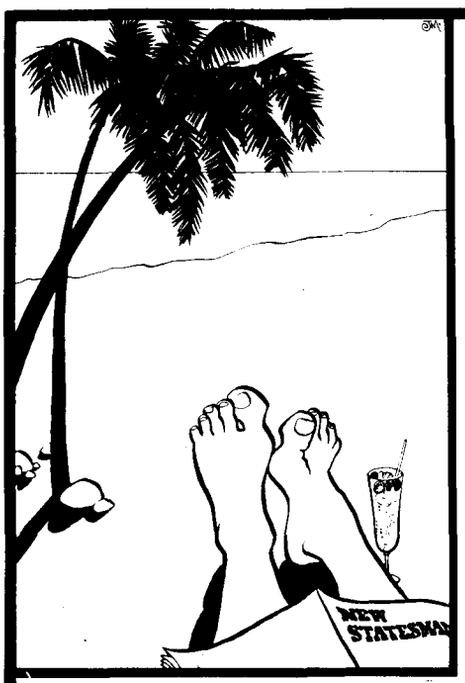
> At three years of age 68 per cent of the children examined would be expected to have a bone age within about five months above or below their chronological age, and 95 per cent within about 10 months; at 16 years the respective figures would be about 13 months and about 26 months either way.

In the Avebury report, Dr Noel Cameron of the Institute of Child Health in London says Baroness Young based her estimates on studies of white children born in the USA and of North European descent — not (as she has claimed) children of 'mixed ethnic origin'. Even these are bound to be wrong '32 per cent of the time or three times out of 10'. There are further problems about evaluating real age from the bone age of a child from the Indian sub-continent. Reliable up-to-date information does not exist for these children and there are cultural and nutritional differences within the Indian population, the effects of which are unknown.

Why, the report asks, does the government refuse at least to give a firm undertaking to confine X-rays to the hand and wrist alone, a method considered perfectly adequate by medical opinion in Britain?

> One possible explanation is that there are probably several hundred appeals against refusal of entry clearance still outstanding in which the case against the appellant children is based on X-ray evidence of areas other than just the left hand and wrist.

Lord Carrington told Parliament in March that age X-rays had been stopped in India 'where there has been relatively little need in the past to use the procedure'. But government figures show that 760 were conducted in Pakistan in the last nine months of 1980.



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Ripper 'aid' a fantasy

ROB ROHRER attacks flimsy accomplice theory

DID PETER SUTCLIFFE, the Yorkshire Ripper, have an accomplice? And did this partner manufacture the tape and letters sent from Sunderland which convinced West Yorkshire police for two years that their quarry spoke with a Wearside accent? This theory was born among Yorkshire detectives — notably assistant Chief Constable George Oldfield — and deftly elaborated a week ago by the *Sunday Times* 'Insight' team. But fresh evidence, combined with a more rigorous testing of the Sunderland connection, now suggests the theory is located in the realms of the far-fetched.

The third Sunderland letter from the writer signing himself 'Jack the Ripper' arrived at West Yorkshire police headquarters in late March 1979. It was well over 40 weeks since detectives had had a look down on the Yorkshire Ripper's distinctively gruesome trademark.

> I bet you be wondering how come I havn't been to work fo ages, well I would have been if it hadn't been for your curserred coppers I had the lady just where I wanted her and was about to strike when one of you cursing police cars stopped right outside the lane.

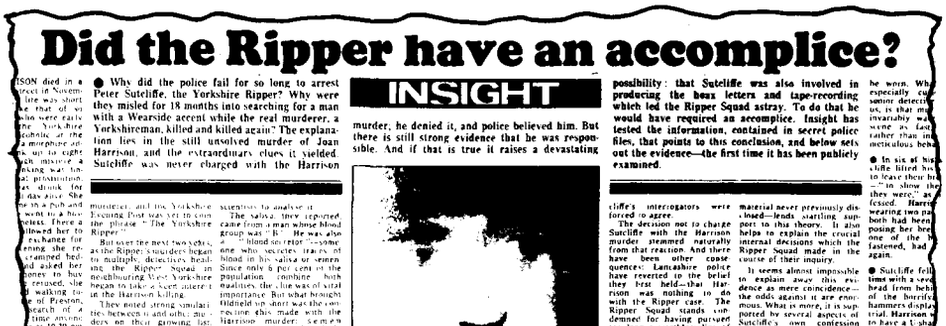
There was little to distinguish it from scores of hoax letters aimed at the police. But one clue did emerge. The saliva used to seal down the envelope flap showed a B-blood group reading; the sender was therefore not only blood group B but a secretor — someone who secretes blood cells into their bodily fluids. B-secretors form around 6 per cent of the population.

This finding tentatively linked the letter with one unsolved murder which some detectives wanted to include in the Ripper series. Joan Harrison's body, found at Preston in 1975, had carried semen deposits — from intercourse and buggery 'immediately prior to death' — which indicated her killer was a B-secretor. On Harrison's left breast was a distinct bite mark, clearly indicating a gap in the upper front teeth: bite mark evidence, used by forensic odontologists to make comparisons with a suspect's teeth, is now afforded equal status to finger-print evidence.

Two earlier letters from Sunderland, in the same hand, had claimed responsibility for the Preston killing, but many detectives remained sceptical. Harrison's death had marked dissimilarities to other accepted Ripper killings. There was the evidence of direct sexual activity; Harrison had been stripped of jewellery, watch and handbag; she had been kicked to death (with few exceptions the Ripper hammered and stabbed his victims). There were similarities in the way her clothing had been left — the draping of the coat, the positioning of one boot between the legs, the re-siting of the victim's bra. But were these ritualistic parallels the work of one killer, or coincidence?

Much pivoted on Preston. Was the letter writer the killer of Joan Harrison? And if so, was he the kiler of many other women as the letters boasted? Did the Ripper squad have their best clues yet — a lengthy sample of the Ripper's handwriting and the knowledge that he belonged to a rare blood group?

The opportunity to test the connection came less than a fortnight after the third letter was delivered. Josephine Whitaker's body was found on open grassland a few hundred yards away from her Halifax home. Two sudden blows from a hammer had sent her to the ground and she had then been stabbed across the body with a viciously honed screw driver. But several faint marks on the body caught the police's attention and made them think immediately of Joan Harrison. Were they bite marks?



Did the Ripper have an accomplice?

INSIGHT

● Why did the police fail for so long to arrest Peter Sutcliffe, the Yorkshire Ripper? Why were they misled for 18 months into searching for a man with a Wearside accent while the real murderer, a Yorkshireman, killed and killed again? The explanation lies in the still unsolved murder of Joan Harrison, and the extraordinary clues it yielded. Sutcliffe was never charged with the Harrison murder, he denied it, and police believed him. But there is still strong evidence that he was responsible. And if that is true it raises a devastating possibility: that Sutcliffe was also involved in producing the hoax letters and tape-recording which led the Ripper Squad astray. To do that he would have required an accomplice. Insight has tested the information, contained in secret police files, that points to this conclusion, and below sets out the evidence—the first time it has been publicly examined.

Sunday Times, 24 May 1981

Earlier this year Peter Sutcliffe confessed in detail to the killing of Josephine Whitaker and 12 other women. During his interrogation he was asked about the marks on Whitaker. His answer was clear. He had not bitten her. He also repeatedly denied the murder of Joan Harrison. And although belonging to Blood Group B, Sutcliffe is not a secretor.

THE THEORY of accomplice has been developed to tie Sutcliffe to the Preston murder (although not to the sexual activity there) and to the Sunderland letters. This theory rests centrally, according to last week's Insight report, on a bite mark upon Whitaker's left breast. Like the Harrison bite mark, it is claimed, it showed a gap between the two upper front teeth. Peter Sutcliffe has a noticeable gap in his upper teeth. Some detectives are said to be convinced he bit both victims.

New Statesman inquiries, however, show there was no bite mark of any description on Whitaker's left breast. The marks which detectives thought *might* be bite marks were on her right breast. But the detectives' conjecture could not be supported by expert opinion. The marks could equally well have been caused by the scratching of Sutcliffe's finger nails as he carried out his customary act of dragging his victims' bra upwards, or by the v-wedge of a claw hammer. Sutcliffe is known to have reversed the claw hammer in this way on one victim.

Even comparisons between Sutcliffe's teeth and the Harrison bite mark may prove difficult. The Liverpool dental expert who examined it is now dead and only sketchy records survive. They do not include any original close up photographs of the wound. This startling lack of records may explain why Ripper Squad detectives appear not to have sought an impression of Sutcliffe's teeth in order to finally test whether he was involved in the Harrison killing.

But the conjectural 'bite mark' — although central to the accomplice theory — supposedly enjoys corroboration. George Oldfield, as he led the Ripper inquiry, stated publicly that the Sunderland letters contained information known only to the murderer. The proof, his supporters argue, lies in the predictions, the knowledgeable asides, the intimate information about one victim, and a postscript only properly explained, some say, by elements of Peter Sutcliffe's confession.

Point by point, however, the most persuasive of these arguments can be dismantled and the letters shown to be near-certain hoaxes.

At first the author's claim to be the Preston killer was regarded as impressive. The murder had not been publicly announced as a 'Ripper possible', or so the police thought. In fact, several newspapers had announced the Preston Connection.

But the 'accomplice' theorists continue. In the third letter there is a reference to one of the Manchester victims, Vera Millward:

> that bit about being in hospital — funny the lady mentioned something about being in the same hospital before I stopped her whoring ways.

The police, according to the theory, kept secret Millward's hospital treatment as an in-patient, although her husband in talking to newspapers had implied she was an out-patient there. But he also told the *Daily Mail* 'she had been to the hospital before about stomach pains' — enough for a hoaxer to go on. In fact the same paragraph contains a

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much more significant pointer to its source material: 'that bit' is the phrase used, referring perhaps to a bit or passage, in a newspaper story rather than a conversation. The same phrase also appears elsewhere in the letters: 'that bit about killing myself, no chance'; a clear allusion to newspaper speculations about the Ripper's suicide.

The letter writer's predictions, too, were somewhat erratic. He correctly said there would be another Manchester victim, but inaccurately warned the next in sequence would be in Bradford.

Finally, in the postscript to the first letter the Sunderland correspondent adds: 'Huddesfield (sic) never again, too small, close call last one' — a reference to the Rytka murder some weeks before the letter had been posted.

But something other than guilty knowledge could have inspired the letter writer. George Oldfield — described by the letter writer as 'a man I respect' — had emphatically described the 'close call' of Rytka's killer. He told newspapers 'we are now closer to the killer on this inquiry than we have been in any of the others. We are so very, very close.' Huddersfield's red light district — centred on a stretch of railway arches — is compact and in mid-evening hardly deserted. 'Information from a man who might have seen the Ripper only minutes before he killed Miss Rytka is being sifted,' reported one newspaper. Ample source material for a hoaxer.

Without the Whitaker 'bite mark' the circumstantial evidence to support the accomplice theory crumbles away. What is left hardly startles and can be readily accounted for by banal coincidence, the very quality which marked Peter Sutcliffe's capture. □

This England

£3 book tokens for entries printed. (On postcard, please.)

□ It was a year in which the world seemed to have gone completely mad, said Coun. Parker. 'The shooting of that marvellous man Pope John, the terrible events just across the Irish Sea and the senseless slaughter of that beautiful swan in the Jephson Gardens make us ask what the future holds for any of us.' — *Leamington & District Morning News* (Richard Chessam)

□ Roman Catholic couples are facing a ban on wedding night love. The Roman Catholic bishop of Brentwood has instructed his priests to warn their parishioners not to consummate their 'marriages', because of industrial action by registrars. A spokesman for the Essex diocese said: 'Our people will well understand the need to refrain until after the sacrament of marriage conducted by a priest. We expect no problems.' — *Daily Telegraph* (D.P.M. Salter)

□ A canon of the Church of England admitted to visualising Christ as 'exactly like the Duke of Edinburgh.' — *Guardian* (B. Hodges)

□ A man who broke a window in a house in Exchange Street, Colne, when he was looking for his wife, told a policeman: 'I have been bitten by a platypus duck.' — *Burnley Evening Star* (G. Moor)

□ 'Most people in Scarborough have never even *seen* a bloody homosexual,' said one visitor. — *Sunday Times* (Jimmie Pearse)

And all that

Arthur Marshall

A KIND FRIEND, reading of my daunting experiences in youth in prep school history lessons and of the dreary and unimaginative manner in which they were conducted (I mentioned the lack of sparkle and intellectual appeal to be found in the Treaty of Ulm but, now I come to think of it, the Treaty of Utrecht was a hundred times worse), and knowing of my present keenness to learn more of the past events in our island story, has sent me the very thing to help to widen my horizons, a book called, and could any title be more apt, *Little Arthur's History of England*. It kicks off with 'You know, my dear little Arthur, that the country you live in is called England', and we build from there. It is the work of a Lady Callcott and was first published by the wholly admirable John Murray — then, as now, of Albemarle Street — in 1874, the numerous further editions being steadily brought up to date, the copy I have forming the 1924 one and featuring as its frontispiece Their Majesties George V and Queen Mary, looking suitably solemn and in fullest Coronation rig and fig. Whether the subsequent additions, year by year, were still the work of Lady Callcott who, by 1924, must have been pretty long in the tooth, who can say? Certainly no other name claims any credit. *Le style,* thoughtful old de Buffon tells us, *est l'homme même* and one can detect not the faintest variation in her ladyship's style, a gracious mingling of serenity and simplicity and condescension, in the post-1874 sections and so perhaps she kept at it to the end.

Where, one so wonders, did she bone up on the facts of this vast historical panorama and what, one asks oneself, were her sources? Her judgments were, I fancy, all her own and she is fond of using just the one adjective or short and crisp phrase, often of a somewhat dismissive nature: Richard II ('not well brought up'), James I ('mischievous'), Elfrida ('everybody hated her'), the Scots ('rude and wild'), Elizabeth I ('useful', and who can deny it?), Louis XIV ('grasping'), Queen Anne ('not very clever'), Edgar Atheling ('silly'), Bacon ('not without his faults'). Our authoress is as clear in her mind about the pleasures, apparently available to all, of life in the England of 1874, 'that dear country where God allows us to live and which He has given us to love,' as she is about that dear country's very right and proper class structure and divisions. Whether born blue-blooded or blue-blooded by marriage or merely the marital appendage of a baron or a knight we do not know but she comes down very strongly on the side of the nobility. 'Perhaps you wonder, my little friend, if it is of any use that there should be noblemen. I think it is, and I will tell you why.' She does just that, and finds good reasons everywhere. Look, for instance, at Magna Carta and King John ('greedy'), and there is a further point of interest: 'As nobles are rich enough to live without working for themselves and their families, they have time to be always ready when the king wants advice.' There now! Those who, with my little friend, were perhaps wondering about their usefulness are fully answered, and it is no surprise to find that nobles have 'next after the king, been the people we have loved best and who have done us the most good.' You see? And to banish any lingering doubts in Little Arthur's mind (he may, after all, have seen some nobles who were possibly being a little bit less useful than those in Lady C's orbit), she adds the reassuring words, 'When you are older you will understand this better.' I'll say!

I am sorry to have yet again to distress the Francophiles among us but the Callcott view of our neighbours, in peace and more especially in war, is not a flattering one. At the battle of Crecy, where Edward III insisted on our troops 'having a good breakfast before they began', the frogs are shown to have suddenly remembered appointments elsewhere and to have left the field of play precipitately and in large numbers. And ditto at Poitiers where our opponents were seen to be hastily hooking it almost before the kick-off. Nobody needs to be reminded of what happened at Agincourt, but what about Henry VIII's Battle of the Spurs where, for sheer acceleration and with the aid of those spurs, the French speed of departure from the area where the action was, amazed one and all. And the same again at Blenheim.

An event nearer her time puts our authoress into a terrible state. How very distressing that the French people's appreciation of their nobility has by no means always been as satisfactory as our own and when we come to the French Revolution the prose becomes, for the only time, agitated and bristling with unwritten 'Tchs!'. 'A number of bad people collected in Paris' it seems, and heads flew off in all directions. 'In short, I believe the French people did more wicked things in about three years than any other nation has done in a hundred.' Robespierre ('the most wicked of all') comes in for a drubbing, and even a century later, when a lot of people had cheered up about the frogs, Lady Callcott does not give the *entente cordiale* the warmest of welcomes ('rather less than a treaty').

Delightfully human confessions dot the text. The Romans, who get outstandingly good marks, taught us how to grow cabbages and onions and apples 'and other useful things which I have forgotten.' *Was* there a library in York in Roman times ('I am not quite sure of this'). And as to the arrival in England of Mary Queen of Scots, 'I must say that I wish she had never come'. And a passage concerning one of the numerous improvements during Victoria's reign is currently to the point. 'Another great help was the Penny Post. When Queen Victoria came to the throne, only rich people could send letters to one another, because the rates of postage were so very high. Only members of Parliament could send them free of cost. The postage was now fixed at a penny a letter.' I wish that we could let Lady Callcott loose on Buzby ('an offensively unfunny bird which everybody hated'). □

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Diary

BRUCE PAGE

■ Two issues back, we ran an excellent piece of Mick Hamer's detailing the GLC bureaucracy's undisclosed road-widening plans — which add up to a scheme for turning London into a (bankrupt) concrete jungle. There wasn't space, of course, to put the whole truth in the paper, so we put up a reader's offer. For £1 you could (and still can) get from us a comprehensive list of road-widening proposals from Hammersmith to Hackney.

Business has been quite brisk.

On Monday, we got an order for four copies (with a payment of £4) from the GLC research department.

■ Last autumn my colleague Peter Kellner had a run-in in the *NS* with the maddest of all monetarists, Professor Patrick Minford of Liverpool University. Subsequently the Cambridge University's Tory Reform Group invited both men to debate the Government's economics. Peter offered to break his life-long rule never to address Tory gatherings except out of dire necessity, in order to enter the debate of the year. 'If Minford agrees to come, so do I', he wrote. Minford, however, has chickened out; now Peter is left with the rather more tedious job of demolishing Patrick Jenkin, the social services secretary, instead.

■ What do you say to someone who has just had his citizenship amputated by a couple of superficially amiable officials?

I went last Thursday to the LSE to hear Julius Tomin give a public lecture *On Intellectual Freedom:* some *NS* readers will recall that in March 1980, while Tomin was still in Prague, we published a long article by him which placed the daily activities of the Czechoslovak secret policy firmly into philosophical context (not many people can coolly interpret their persecutors in the light of Thucydides, Plato and Marx). Not so long afterwards the Prague regime found it . . . convenient to allow Tomin and his wife (a leading member of Charter '77) to leave for five years' residence in the West.

It was on the day after his lecture that the Tomins kept an appointment at the Czechoslovak Embassy, though the letter 'inviting' them to attend was in fact written a few days ago. They were told they had been engaging in 'counter-revolutionary activity' since being in the West: this consisting, naturally, of protests (not by any means inflammatory ones) about the arbitrary way the secret police operate against people inside Czechoslovakia. The two Embassy men, says Tomin, were really quite decent about it: probably they find it hard to believe that anyone who *can* live in the West should wish (as he does) to return to Czechoslovakia.

Well, hasn't Britain always been an alternative home for exile from European persecution? True, but over the years since 1968 our own state has fallen increasingly into the habit of revoking, withdrawing, redefining and degrading the rights of nationality. I hope we shall offer Julius Tomin British citizenship if he needs and desires it. But in the era of the Nationality Bill, it's a rather more shop-soiled gift than it used to be.

■ The LSE being what it is, I'm sure there were some Cold War talent-scouts giving Julius a look-over (just now he's Visiting Professor in the Oxford philosophy sub-faculty). They must have been discommoded.

He is a testing lecturer by academia's orthodox standards. There is no prepared text, and no way of knowing when he may stop dead in the midst of some well-thumbed passage of Aristotle, while a brand-new interpretation struggles to his mind's surface. (Many people have become so used to intellectual convenience-foods as to forget that ideas, so far from 'carrying you along', more usually have an exactly opposite effect.) Note-taking isn't easy, but I hope I got the ending about right:

> In Britain, there is freedom. But there is also unemployment. Now for me it is necessary, wherever I am, to make a *gedanken-experiment* — thought experiment — as to what is the worst thing that can happen to me. Now, here the worst thing is unemployment, and when I am unemployed, am I free?
>
> In Czechoslovakia, I was unemployed. But that was not what made me unfree. Often it was difficult, hard, even humiliating. My wife is working, as interpreter, and I try hard to perform the housework. And there is a row because I have not dried her underpants in time for a conference. This does not make me *unfree*, because everyone knows that the reason I am unemployed is *political*. Because this reason is known to everyone, the unemployment does not take away my freedom: in fact, I am held in a very special elite.
>
> But when I am unemployed in this country, is this true? I do not think it is. So, to my question, are the unemployed in Britain free? — I think the answer must be: No. Thank you, that is all.

■ Our supermarket firms — as Hannah Wright argues elsewhere — may not be all they should be. But for all that, they are vastly better than our awful bureaucracy has a right to expect.

Early this year, Sainsbury's learned that the acid-level in many batches of Italian canned tomatoes was falling dangerously low. It has to be maintained in order to fend off botulism: and sure enough there was alarming evidence of botulism-deaths being caused in several countries by canned tomatoes.

Sainsbury's wheeled along to the Ministry of Agriculture, and said wouldn't it be a good idea to stiffen up the regulations for canned tomatoes entering Britain. The Ministry passed this on to the DHSS, who said they saw no immediate problem, because there hadn't been any deaths or illnesses here. But, after a suitable pause, they took action. They *lowered* the standard for canned tomatoes entering Britain.

A little fossicking around Whitehall reveals that this happened because the FO leaned on the DHSS, saying that losses in the tomato trade (on top of the earthquake) might upset Italy's politico-economic balance. Better botulism in Britain than communism in Italy.

The supermarket operators, I'm glad to say, were not prepared to submit their customers' innards to this kind of realpolitik. Their own sceintific teams have been dispatched to Italy to screen out the dubious cans.

■ I suppose we can afford to be a bit more generous about the Labour Party's new theoretical journal (see p.4) than their advanced publicity has managed to be about us. (To suggest to the *Times* diary that we're 'sitting on the fence' about the Social Democrats because we try to give them, sometimes, a fair crack of the whip, is ridiculous.)

Let me offer them a spoonful of advice. All journals directly sponsored by the Labour Party so far have been paralysed by the Panjandrum Syndrome, which manifests itself in the delusion that because people occupy high rank in the Labour movement, they therefore have interesting things to say. The *New Socialist*'s initial menu already exhibits symptoms: I am prepared to bet my tattered copy of the *Eighteenth Brumaire* that Clive Jenkins on the Social Democrats will be an offering wholly devoid of theoretical insights. (Next: Merlyn Rees on The Problem of Effective Demand in Rosa Luxemburg and Tugan-Baranowski.)

■ There are moments when journalism seems an unattractive trade. I spoke the other day at a meeting where Doreen Hill, the brave mother of Peter Sutcliffe's final victim, got up to explain to some printworkers why she loathed cheque-book journalism. After I'd said a few words, a fluent young man from the *Guardian* asked me — in the lady's presence — if I could explain why buying up somebody from the Sutcliffe family was different from paying a war hero's widow for a dramatic story of his life and death. I had to tell him that if he didn't know the difference now, he would never discover it.

Roger Woddis

Men of cloth

Fifty-five British army of the Rhine chaplains have taken part in a mock nuclear exercise in West Germany.

The Army's one foundation
  Is Jesus Christ, our Lord;
We are His true creation
  By missile and by sword.
The Army's heart rejoices
  That He is on our side,
Yea, even when He voices
  His doubts at genocide.

Though we salute the Master
  We call the Prince of Peace,
Our methods work much faster
  To speed the soul's release.
His saints are marching slowly
  Towards the promised land,
Though God forbid the lowly
  Should gain the upper hand.

His voice was never strident,
  His manner ever meek:
He would have wept at Trident
  And turned the other cheek.
Still in His name we foster
  The spirit of the corps,
And breathe a paternoster,
  As we prepare for war.

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LETTERS

Tory vote fixing

Not only does the *NS* 'redress the balance' (G. M. Morris, Letters 22 May) with Michael Coren's article on Tory vote fixing (at the Federation of Conservative Students Conference), it has forced several Tories to admit to student newspapers that there is a serious lack of democracy in FCS.

Peter Young has now admitted that he paid Coren and other delegates to vote for the right-wing. Chris Bones, a FCS and National Union of Students Executive member, has said the number of delegates Young paid was 'quite large.' Graeme Kidd, another delegate at the conference, put the number of bogus delegates (of both 'wets' and 'arids') at 'more than 150.'

Richard Gibbs, former London Region Chairman of FCS, estimated the amount of money involved was some £3,000 and suggested the 'Heritage Foundation' (a right-wing American organisation) as a possible source. Gibbs described the conference as dominated by 'bootboy Tories' and also claimed infiltration by people 'who can never be considered Conservatives.'

With former Chairman of LSE FCS, Paul Blacknell, resigning because 'I cannot find my idea of democracy compatible with what went on at Conference', Richard Gibbs has described a 'feeling of total helplessness on the left' (in FCS).

The FCS springboard into national Tory politics has surely been shifted to the far right.

Pete Crockford, National NHS Officer, National Organisation of Labour Students, 150 Walworth Road, SE17

A severed head

Patrick Wintour's account of the Ladywood de-selection (*NS* 29 May) is a description of a political mugging written from the point of view of the much misunderstood muggers ('Victim asked for it . . . done in his own best interests . . shouldn't have been there in the first place') Some factual corrections:

- All Saints Ward is not 'often inquorate'. The Ladywood Ward has been more so.
- If Ladywood Ward is 'regarded locally as right wing' it can only be by myopic Trotskyites. It is the base of many of the Left.
- Sever's re-selection speech was not a *mea culpa* but urged a new deal on both sides. Hardly surprisingly when his exclusion was being deliberately engineered.
- *Militant* supporters don't always wear labels and devote their working hours to selling *Militant* to each other. Some don't parade their allegiance. Others go along. The danger of *Militant* is that it is a nationally organised nucleus and the question of loyalties now is not a matter of labels but whether or not individuals whatever their politics are prepared to go along with the machinations.
- Describing Mr Bore as 'Tribunite' makes him sound almost cuddly. I'm not sure how his defence of the Russian invasion of Afghanistan will appeal to the Moslems in Ladywood.
- The account of the membership applications in Soho is disingenuous. When Petris reported in December, many of the applications had already been waiting for months. Delay suited the anti-Sever faction because they won at the Ward's annual meeting by half a dozen votes while a dozen applicant members sat excluded at the back. A changed GMC resulting from a changed Ward could have put the re-selection back and strengthened Sever's chances.

If Sever's opponents are the goodies, what on earth is the point of dumping a loyal hard-working MP when it hardly matters because the constituency is about to be abolished anyway? The whole business leaves a nasty taste in the mouth.

Austin Mitchell MP, House of Commons, SW1

NHS under threat?

Amrit Wilson's article 'NHS may rule out blacks' (*NS* 29 May) reveals the serious threat to black people of the government's proposal to charge 'visitors' for NHS treatment. However, these proposals have sinister implications for the whole future of the NHS.

By introducing a scale of charges for most NHS treatment and the bureaucracy to collect these charges, the Government is laying the infrastructure for the introduction of a large element of payment for NHS services. It would be an easy extension of the system to allow those with medical insurance to pay for NHS treatment or, indeed, to force those on higher incomes to insure and pay. It is the Government's avowed aim to increase the insurance element in health services to 25 per cent and so far they have been unable to tell us how they intend to achieve this result.

NHS charges for overseas 'visitors' can be dressed up as electorally popular. The Government claim they are trying to stop 'abuse', but their proposal will cost more to administer than it will raise. Administrative difficulties have caused the Government to delay implementation of the scheme but they say they are still determined to introduce it. Everybody who is anti-racist and a supporter of the NHS should campaign actively to prevent this evil proposal being put into effect.

Anne Weyman, Hon. Secretary, Socialist Health Association, 9 Poland Street, W1

Were you in the IVS?

International Voluntary Service is celebrating the 50th anniversary of international workcamps with a reunion during August Bank Holiday weekend at Brynmawr, the site of the first such service in 1931. Any ex-volunteers are invited to come to Brynmawr or get in touch with them: this includes anyone who may have taken part in IVS, IVSP (International Voluntary Service for Peace, 1934-1956) or other workcamp organisations. Contact Nigel Watt, General Secretary, IVS, 'Ceresole House', 53 Regent Road, Leicester.

Know the enemy

'The right of reply'? *Debrett's Handbook*, whose editor I am, was calumniated in a recent *New Statesman* (Diary 8 May) and I was offered a chance to respond. But by the simple professional expedient of telephoning to check a few points before rushing into print, this need never have happened at all.

I make a specific charge of gratuitous malice: 'This (*Debrett's Handbook*) will be a predictable collection of scoundrels and crooks' . . . Well, yes, Lord Kagan is a convicted criminal and perhaps some of the other 20,000-odd entries occasionally park on double yellow lines or fiddle their expenses. But to brand the lot as scoundrels and, further, implicitly dismiss the book *as a book* because of it, is like arguing that Bruce Page is unfit to edit the *NS* on the grounds that, as an Australian, he has convict blood in him.

Debrett's Handbook is a general biographical reference work, most closely based on the old *Kelly's Handbook*. A new generation has only *Who's Who* (Hereinafter *WW*) to compare it with, hence the disdainful, 'it's hard to see how it will differ from *Who's Who* . . . ' I could retort, echoing Asquith, 'wait and see', but will reply that we aim to exploit *WW*'s weaker points, which seem to me to be a bias towards academic and civil servants and a corresponding ignoring of businessmen. How many businessmen get honours compared with the bureaucrats who now have the crust to be on strike?

NS readers may sneer, but ours are important people — socially, financially, constitutionally. All thousand or so hereditary legislators can be included and their heirs. Many *NS* readers are impressed by titles: that is reality; you have your market, we have ours. The 'Establishment' is still a very inter-related entity. Which London editor regularly publishes his first cousin's second husband? Which Minister is second cousin to one of the political advisers (who himself is great grandson of a former PM and married to a granddaughter of that selfsame PM)? Which MP of the 1979 intake is not only descended from James II but also kinsman to Sir Winston Churchill and eighth cousin of the future Princess of Wales? All these facts and more can be found in Debrett's Handbook.

Charles Mosley, Debretts Peerage Ltd, 73/77 Britannia Road, SW6

Feeding Cambodia

John Pilger writes (*NS* 22 May) 'Last week the "landbridge" from Thailand to Cambodia was re-opened, allowing Western, chiefly American sustenance to flow more conveniently to Pol Pot's Khmer Rouge and thus to accelerate the "destabilisation" of both Cambodia and Vietnam. . .'

This is not true. The landbridge was reopened to ship 2,500 tons of *seed* to farmers under the control of the Vietnamese-backed government in Phnom Penh. It was necessary because the UN's Food and Agriculture Organisation failed to ship adequate seed supplies direct to Phnom Penh in time for this year's planting.

That failure was in part because of Thai Government obstruction; the Thais certainly like the landbridge. The Khmer Rouge may obtain some of these seeds but they have never depended on the landbridge for 'sustenance.' That has been provided largely by World Food Programme supplies delivered to them directly by the Royal Thai Army; UNICEF has also delivered supplies to them. This has certainly been the most appalling part of the entire relief operation. But it is not the same as the landbridge which fed at least many hundreds of thousands of people through 1979-80 and which poured 22,500 tons of seed into Battambang province for the 1980 planting: that seed was essential to the 1980 harvest.

As for the 'sustenance' to the Khmer Rouge being 'chiefly American', the United States has been by far the largest contributor to the entire UN relief programme. More than half of that programme has been on behalf of the government in Phnom Penh; the sustenance going there has also been 'chiefly American.'

William Shawcross
17 Parkhill Road, NW3

Inflation survey

The Tom Harrisson Mass-Observation Archive is conducting a three-year survey into the effects of inflation on daily life and is appealing for volunteer observers and reporters. The work is interesting and not arduous, involving only a willingness to write to the Archive both about personal experience and things seen and heard in daily life. The experience of 'ordinary' people is of particular interest.

Details of the project from Professor D. F. Pocock, The Tom Harrison Mass-Observation Archive, Arts Building D, University of Sussex, Brighton. The identity of any participants will be treated as a matter of confidence between them and the Archive.

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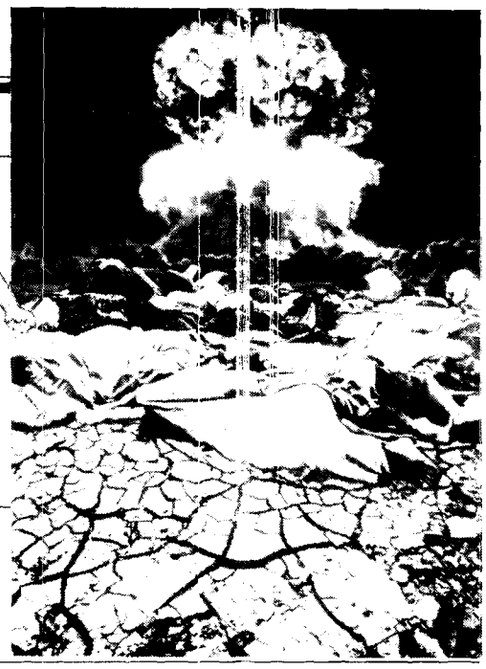

Bomb shock: drawings by the survivors of Hiroshima; and (far right) a vision of World War III by Peter Kennard

Martin Shaw on morality and the nuclear holocaust

And will your skin peel?

SUCKLING INFANTS cling to charred mothers; a man holds his eyeball in his palm; a small boy cries at a garden gate, and when approached is found to be dead. 'A mother, driven half-mad while looking for her child, was calling his name. At last she found him. His head looked like a boiled octopus. His eyes were half-closed, and his mouth was white, pursed and swollen.' 'Survivors' wander about, their skin hanging peeled from their hips. 'A burning pine tree. A naked woman. Naked girls crying "Stupid America!" '

These are some of the notes by victims of the first atomic bomb in *Unforgettable Fire*. They describe a collection of drawings and paintings made nearly 30 years later by those who survived the burning of Hiroshima. These pictures, like the accounts collected from children by Arata Osada only a few years after the attack, defy evaluation in the measured terms of the reviewer's trade. The appalling sadness and heroism of 6 August 1945 are indelibly portrayed. The pictures especially are immensely moving — as John Hersey has said, they 'register what has been burned into the minds of the survivors'. The terms of art, literature and politics are all broken down by these incredible documents of the ultimate — so far — in the depths of human experience.

Copies of *Unforgettable Fire* should be sent to every politician who supports a nuclear 'defence' policy — and every *NS* correspondent who has been quick to raise a pen against Edward Thompson's nuclear-free Europe. But would it do any good? To move from these books to the world of strategy and weapons technology, amply documented by Christopher Lee, is already to sell the pass on our children. You cannot follow the anguish of Hiroshima with arguments about the relative merits of different missiles, without losing some of your moral discrimination.

To be fair to Lee, he has not made the terrible world he describes. He is just a reporter (for the BBC) and all he has done, really, is to package a lot of the available information and arguments for a growing market. His preface consists almost entirely of the text of Lord Mountbatten's Strasbourg speech, with its dire warnings of nuclear war and its call for a balance or reduction in nuclear armaments. Are we to take this as a position? Well, no — as befits a staff officer of Her Majesty's Broadcasting Corporation, Lee is not taking sides, not even in the most timorous multilateralist sense. 'This is not part of an international peace campaign' he writes, 'nor is it a plea on behalf of what are commonly called "hawks".'

Maybe journalistic impartiality, like academic objectivity, is too easy a target. But it is difficult to write about nuclear war without feeling — to put it no higher — some sense of involvement. 'Will we survive the 1980s?' asks Lee's subtitle: a momentous question, and the book is suitably dedicated to his children. But if the question is a real one, more than a ruse to catch the casual buyer's eye, we are entitled to ask for some glimmer of an answer, some suggestions as to solutions. All we get is facts, more facts and the occasional piece of random speculation.

Some of the facts are of questionable relevance — 'Labour Defence Minister, Mr Fred Mulley, fell asleep during an RAF flypast in the presence of the Queen'. Others are more to the point — 'Mr Mulley was very well thought of by many defence chiefs'. If you want to know how many languages the NATO Secretary-General must speak, Mr Lee will tell you this just as readily as the number of tanks and missiles they have. A great deal of the information could be useful, if it were both ordered and combined with a greater semblance of imagination and judgement. When I think of nuclear effects, for example, I shall think of the man holding his eyeball, not Mr Lee's 'there is also the possibility of permanent eye injury'.

If we want answers we must look for the links between the human horror of Hiroshima and the half-life world of 'defence'. They seem to be found in politics, although the justifications are so shadowy that one understands the reluctance of strategic commentators like Lee to embroil themselves very deeply. Behind the bombing of Hiroshima lay the apparent purpose of protecting freedom and democracy against the totalitarianisms of Japan and the USSR. Behind the weapons and the strategic planning today lie similar professed goals — the defence of Western freedom and national independence and, on the other side, of the socialist system against imperialism.

We need to ask whether such political arguments should be taken seriously at all. Compare the mass murder of Hiroshima and Nagasaki with that of the gas chambers — does the fact that one was perpetrated in the name of political ideals of which we may partly approve, the other according to the inherently evil logic of Nazi anti-semitism, really make a jot of difference to the appalling human misery involved? And consider the projections of mass killing in nuclear war: hundreds of millions of people cheerfully discounted by the strategic planners. If anyone is left to think about these things, will not Hitler appear a minor criminal compared to Reagan and Brezhnev or whichever of their successors presses the button?

IF POLITICS is about anything, it must surely be about the balancing of means and ends, and with nuclear weapons there can never be this fit. Nor can a meaningful distinction be made between possession of the weapons and their use — 'deterrence' depends on the other side believing in the possibility of use. If the USA and USSR wish each other to believe that they will use their missiles, we must believe it too, and judge both of them accordingly.

For the people of the Northern hemisphere, potential victims of any East-West war, the only rational starting-point for a politics of nuclear weapons is the one adopted in Japan: total banishment and rejection. It makes little difference whether one argues from a Christian, liberal-humanist or socialist point of view: the basic argument about means and ends still works. The 'socialist' case for nuclear 'defence' of the USSR is as anachronistic as the Western arguments for deterrence to preserve 'civilisation'.

Unforgettable Fire edited by Japan Broadcasting Corporation *Wildwood House* £4.95

Children of Hiroshima edited by Arata Osada *Taylor and Francis* £4.95

The Final Decade by CHRISTOPHER LEE *Hamish Hamilton* £8.95

No Nuclear Weapons by PETER KENNARD and RIC SISSONS *Pluto Press/CND* £1

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The politics of anti-war movements will always start from *No Nuclear Weapons* — the title of Kennard and Sissons' very effective pamphlet — and this cannot be dismissed as a purely emotive stance. Rather it is the only political position that fully, rationally takes account of the human reality of Hiroshima and the holocaust. The problems arise not because the position is wrong, but because of the huge gap between this aspiration of millions and the reality of a state-system totally embroiled in military rivalries. Even in Japan, rearmament is very rapid, and it may only be a matter of time before the nuclear 'taboo' is broken. We have to look for ways of breaking through the terrible processes of nuclear escalation and proliferation.

Here I think that even its opponents will agree — if they are honest — that the proposal for a European nuclear-free zone has been extraordinarily important in unlocking the issues. One shame is that some in the disarmament movement have also failed to see the importance of the arguments. Sissons' text is a case in point — it is as clear and precise as Kennard's photomontages are striking, but it only vaguely recognises the 'European dimension'. Edward Thompson and his co-thinkers have hit on the 'weak link' in contemporary East-West rivalry: the preparations for theatre war which are so humanly dangerous, militarily implausible, and politically uncertain, coinciding as they do with the growing economic and political tensions within both blocs. The anti-disarmament forces have been obliged to produce some new arguments: 'deterrence' was the standard response to the basic moral arguments of old-style CND, but it will no longer do now that the attention has been focussed on the precision of theatre war preparations. So we are hearing instead of the 'risks' of disarmament.

The elaboration of the 'European' arguments — a natural part of the movement's development, as well as a response to critics — has naturally dwelt on the unevenness of the process. European Nuclear Disarmament's military aims hit more at the West — there are far more nuclear weapons, in many more countries, in Western than in Eastern Europe. Its political goal of breaking up the blocs is having more impact in Western Europe at the moment, but its long-term implications are far more explosive in the East — where military-political integration is tighter and considered a *sine qua non* by the USSR. As END persists in its determination to involve the courageous oppositionists of Eastern Europe, we shall hear far harsher words from official Russian and other Eastern sources.

Of course, there are risks in this disarmament process. It is a positive, peaceful sort of 'destabilisation' of the superpowers, to set against the negative destabilisation represented by proliferation, intra-bloc rivalry and the like. But what sort of stability has there ever been in the arms race? Even in its coldest days, in the 1950s, it could not succeed in freezing the world in its two empires. And can we say it would have been humanly better or safer if it had? The only stable state that it can ultimately guarantee is the fate of the charred and peeled children of Hiroshima, whose memory should stay with us all.

Elaine Morgan on the history of radio and TV drama

School for playwrights

British Television Drama edited by G. W. Brandt *Cambridge* £19.50 & £6.95
British Radio Drama edited by J. Drakakis *Cambridge* £19.50 & £6.95

IN ITS pioneering days television drama seemed even less likely to develop into an art form than the cinema did in the flickering days of the biograph and the flea-pit. From cramped studio sets, subject to nerve-racking technical hitches, it went out live and vanished into the ether: it was more ephemeral than journalism, and no serious dramatist would waste time on it. Today, in the first stages of the cassette revolution which will make television drama as permanent as print, it has reached the End of the Beginning. There could not be a more opportune time for assessing the achievements of its youth and adolescence.

George Brandt's introductory essay draws the parallel with cinema's gradual emergence into critical respectability, but there is one remarkable difference. His catalogue of the film world's 'culturally OK names' — Chaplin, Ford, Lang, Hitchcock, Renoir, von Stroheim — is a list of directors. In this book the OK creative names are those of writers — Jim Allen, Trevor Griffiths, David Mercer, Peter Nichols, Alan Plater, Dennis Potter, Jeremy Sandford, Peter Watkins. Apparently the Writers' Guild motto — 'In the beginning was the word' — is not an empty boast in this country. In America, on the other hand, since the days of the trail-blazing Paddy Chayevsky, TV writers have slumped towards the bottom of the literary heap. That must be one reason why even its more sardonic critics recognise the British small screen output as 'the least worst television in the world'.

The plays discussed here range over the last 20 years, and it is remarkable how brightly most of them still shine in the memory. Sandford's *Cathy Come Home,* Allen's *The Lump,* Mercer's *A Suitable Case for Treatment,* Potter's *Nigel Barton* plays, and Watkins's *Culloden* all go back fifteen years or more. The emphasis throughout the book is heavily on the one-off play, and this could hardly have been avoided. Series writers are usually competent craftsmen who can turn in punctual bespoke scripts for any new format that is tossed their way: they are seldom the setters-up of landmarks.

Several of Brandt's chosen few clearly belong to the awkward squad. They have ideas burning holes in their heads. They give headaches to directors and bureaucrats, they discompose Disgusted of Tunbridge Wells and drive Mrs Whitehouse up the wall. It is no accident that two of the most famous plays in the index (Potter's *Brimstone and Treacle* and Watkins's *The War Game*) have never been televised at all. The one equally censor-badgered individualist missing is Kenneth Griffith.

Television critics do not come too badly out of this historical recap. Some tended to be gloomy about the genre: 'Television drama . . . cannot exist. The profession has been pursuing a mirage.' They indulged — some still do — in pointless agonisings over whether hybrid drama/documentary forms were 'legitimate' or 'illegitimate'; and there was an 'idiot's lantern' school which implied that nothing worthwhile would ever be supplied to a mass audience of tasteless groundlings. But on the whole they recognised and acclaimed the good stuff when they saw it, and their strictures on the goggle-box watchers proved hollow because the viewing audience invariably acclaimed it also.

What all the drama writers featured have in common is the conviction that quality writing and mass appeal are not incompatible. None, I think, had his eye on posterity, but they produced work that should and will endure — Potter's perhaps longest, because he delves the deepest and never treads in anyone's footsteps, not even his own.

One point is worth making, in view of the fact that Auntie Beeb is sometimes portrayed as the starchier channel. Nearly all of these writers were given their first big break and most of their TV credits by the BBC. For any aspiring writer with the urge to say '. . . and now for something completely different' there is still no better place to start.

Unless it is in radio, where the competition is not so hot. In recent years TV has hogged most of the limelight and the lion's share of the budget, but it would be a mistake to conclude that *British Radio Drama* makes the duller reading on that account. For one thing, it begins earlier, when TV was a cloud on the horizon no bigger than a man's hand and radio was where it was all happening. In those days the BBC *was* starchy. It was permissible to say 'Dash it all!' but you needed artistic justification for such four-letter expletives as 'd..n!' and 'h..l'. And the people the Corporation was trying to come to terms with included such no-good boyos as Dylan Thomas, bowling googlies like 'Llareggub' at them; and Dorothy L. Sayers, who responded to an invitation to a script conference as follows:

> Oh no, you don't, my poppet. You won't get me to do three days of exhausting travel to Bristol in order to argue about my plays with a committee. What goes into the play, and the language in which it is written, is the author's business. If the Management don't like it, they reject the play, and there is an end.

Talking about ends, it is fascinating to trace back to its source the convention — rampant over the last decade — that it is corny and vulgar to resolve a play, and devilishly subtle to leave it hovering in mid-air. This has never been as popular with listeners and viewers as it is with writers and critics, but apparently it can claim an illustrious initiator — Louis McNeice.

Giles Cooper, Henry Reed and Samuel Beckett are among other writers whose plays

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are reviewed, but radio's real contribution to the British dramatic scene is summed up in the following exchange:

> I was talking to one of my ex-bosses and said: 'By the way, can you think of the names of important modern playwrights who have started in radio?' He just said: 'Yes, all of them!'

That is not far from the truth. The quotation is from David Wade's ferociously honest contribution on 'British Radio Drama since 1960'. He has no illusions about the deeply damaging impact on radio of the rise of TV — 'the Genghis Khan of Shepherd's Bush'. Describing a recent improvement in standards, he admits that a great deal of Radio 4's dramatic output has been upgraded merely from 'plays to Hoover to' to the slightly more demanding 'plays for clearing up the lunch to'. Of Radio 3 he comments:

> I have heard plays which were for radio only in the sense that it was almost impossible to imagine where other than on Radio 3 they might have found a refuge. They combined in equal measure negligibility and pretentiousness.

Despite all this, he conveys an unshaken belief that radio drama can do things no other medium can do; that there are models other and later than *Under Milk Wood* to prove that it can be done very well indeed; and that the quality and status of drama without pictures has finally bottomed out and begun the slow climb back. □

Charles Glass

On their way to heaven

The Pope's Divisions by PETER NICHOLS *Faber* £10
The Jesuits by J. C. H. AVELING *Blond & Briggs* £16.95

The Immaculate Heart sister who taught me as a child used to tell a story about a man who had died and gone to heaven. St Peter met him at the Gates to give him a tour of Paradise. The two passed various large gatherings of men and women all enjoying themselves, until finally they came to a silent, darkened room. 'Who's in there?' the man asked. 'Shh!' said St Peter. 'They're Catholics. They think they're the only ones up here.'

In the post-Vatican II age, it is hard to remember the time when Catholics believed only they could be saved. Peter Nichols brilliantly portrays this new Church in its many and varied manifestations, from the Byzantine intrigues of the Curia to the martyrdom of Archbishop Romero in El Salvador. Though himself an Anglican, baptised by choice at the age of 14, Nichols reveals a reverence for an 'institution that claims to possess the full truth of man's relationship with the divine'.

The Pope's Divisions, so called after Stalin's famous question, is a journalist's, not a theologian's or a priest's, book. The author, *Times* correspondent in Rome since 1957, takes the reader rapidly and easily from one corner of the Catholic world to another, from the Vatican to Manila to Kinshasa to Amsterdam. He meets Küng, Romero, Wojtyla, the Little Sisters of Jesus and Fr O'Keefe of the Jesuits.

The Catholic community, 18 per cent of the world's population, is one which Nichols examines critically (noting the failures of many bishops to face poverty and injustice in their domains, of the Papacy to take seriously Vatican II's pronouncements on collegiality, of the church itself to come to terms with sex and overpopulation) but respectfully ('I never feel like applauding him [Pope John Paul II] when thousands of people are doing so around me. I did when I closed his *Dives in Misericordia.*').

Nichols's illuminating insights and thorough research should benefit Catholic and non-Catholic, clergy and laity, alike. So, *that* is how the Church works, how it is financed, how it survives. His descriptions of the popes and other personalities who run the bureaucracy bring the institution to life: Agostino Casaroli, the Curia's Cardinal-Secretary of State, is 'small, frail looking, soft-spoken, extremely polite, and so precise that he chooses his words like a bird pecking the appropriately flavoured seed'.

THERE IS an atmosphere in *The Pope's Divisions* of sadness, a vision of a world reaching the end of an era. Evil is in the ascendant. 'There is now a widespread conviction that the world, instead of becoming more human, is becoming less so,' Nichols writes. 'It has lost, or is losing, humanity itself. The more hardened we become, the weaker and the less sensitive become the curbs which public opinion should apply.' He reminds us that religion has its 'darker side', and speaks of Jonestown. Later, he lists the Club of Rome's 10 causes of the decline in the human condition. These include overpopulation, 'the impairment of the biosphere', and military spending which is near $450 billion a year.

Nichols does not claim that the Church will solve humanity's problems, but the book leaves the overwhelming impression that he believes Catholicism to offer one hope in 'an age where Satan himself still manages to appear on the covers of the new magazines' and 'when an elite feels man to be no longer dependent on belief in either God or Satan. . .' There are heroes, even in this age, who hunger and thirst for justice's sake, martyrs in Latin America and Zimbabwe, pastors who take the side of their flocks in that largest realm of the contemporary Church, the Third World, as well as theologians who grapple with fragmentary knowledge of eternal truth.

The running of the Church and the relation of its parts to one another and the whole take up most of the book. The place of the Church and its teachings in the wider world take up the rest, and it is in this areas that one comes across mistakes. Nichols writes,

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for example, that Lebanon has one million Maronite Rite Catholics, more than a third of the population. (Lebanon has not had a census since independence in 1943, but most reliable estimates put the Maronites as the country's second largest sect, far less than a third. This is a highly charged issue.)

Nichols treats the Vatican's relationship with Israel as part of the historic difficulty between Christianity and its mother religion. The Holy See's non-recognition of Israel appears, in this view, to be a remnant of medieval anti-semitism. It in fact has more to do with Israel's expulsion in 1948 of thousands of Palestinian Catholics and others, its non-compliance with UN resolutions on the refugees and its refusal to allow Maronite Arab Israeli citizens in Galilee to return to their villages, as well as its brutal occupation of the West Bank, including Bethlehem and East Jerusalem.

The author's political naïveté is exposed in an otherwise informative chapter on Latin America. 'The huge American influence has proved incapable of forcing military regimes to abide by some of the fundamental rules of fair government'. He writes this despite the fact that he adds in a later chapter:

> They [North American Catholics] do, however, constantly hear from Latin American Catholics struggling for basic rights that the teaching about the national security state which effectively denies them these rights comes from the United States military.

His conversations with clergymen and poor Catholics in El Salvador and Brazil ought to have warned him of the false assumption in the former statement.

In his interesting chapter on women, 'Wives and Sisters', Nichols writes that religious feminism 'may quite soon be seen as the biggest instrument for radical change in the Church'. But, he adds, 'I am indifferent to it as such'. This is puzzling.

QUESTIONS of dogma, liturgy and man's relationship to God are for the most part left out. The otherwise complete index has no entry for either God or liturgy. This is understandable in what is, after all, a journalist's book. But he notes of the results of two censuses taken in Quebec:

> . . . the 1971 national census showed that twelve times as many inhabitants of Quebec said they did not believe in God, compared with the 1961 census. Practically everyone went to Church in Duplessis's [the conservative Quebecois cardinal who died in 1959] time.

Is there a relationship between this loss of faith and liturgical changes since Vatican II? I, for one, wish Nichols, from whom I learned a great deal in this book, had looked into this question. He writes that 'the irrational in religion is not only not necessarily bad, but essential, even natural'. Does a vernacular, music-less, new Mass, possessing all the inherent sacredness and mystery of a corporate board meeting, provide a means of worship for what was once called the 'devout Catholic'?

We turn from the Pope's divisions to the Pope's Janissaries in J. C. H. Aveling's *The Jesuits*. This confusing work is by a schoolmaster whose own spiritual transformation from Anglican priest to Catholic to Benedectine priest to married layman might have made better reading than his version of the story of the Society of Jesus. *The Jesuits*, after an opening chapter on the 'Jesuit Image in Literature' which bears little relationship to what follows, traces the history of the society from Ignatius's early years to 'The Modern Jesuit Dilemma'.

Aveling seeks to steer a middle course between the Society's supporters, who believe it to be wonderfully good, and its critics, who believe it to be wonderfully bad. He draws on the historical record to show that the Jesuits were surprisingly ordinary. Ignatius was, according to Aveling, a conventional, middle-class Basque. St Francis Xavier's posthumous fame was 'undeserved'. Indeed, one wonders why this ostensibly ordinary religious order was banned by Papal Bull in 1773 and why Aveling has written this book at all.

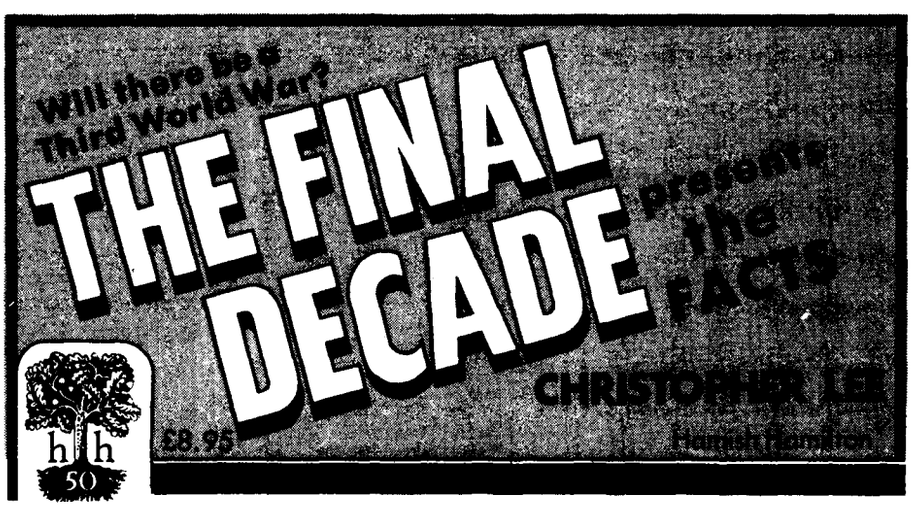
The history of the Jesuits is fascinating, and I would recommend anyone interested in it to read David Mitchell's *The Jesuits: A History*, published last year by Macdonald. Aveling's book relates some interesting facts, one of which is that the inventor of the French instrument of execution, so beloved of the anti-clerical revolutionaries, was a former Jesuit, Dr Joseph-Ignace Guillotin. For the rest, read Mitchell. □

John Keegan

Writing home from a war

An Ensign in the Peninsular War: The Letters of John Aitchison edited by W. F. K. Thompson *Michael Joseph* £15.95

Readers of Boswell's *Journal* will remember that, among his other schemes of life, was one to take up soldiering. But he was choosy. He wanted a commission in the Guards, because they stayed in London, but could find vacancies only in 'marching' regiments. In the end his flinty old father Lord Auchinleck plucked him back to Edinburgh, which was probably for the best — as much as anything was — in his picaresque life. He had already got into bad ways in London, and an officer's pay and scarlet coat would have tempted him into worse. On one of his more hilarious whoring episodes he had decided to wear red, in the hope of being taken for a soldier — the appearance of



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ANDRE DEUTSCH

gallantry being an excuse for its practice, as he might have put it to himself.

John Aitchison would have had no truck with such a misuse of the word. His father, a Scot of Lord Auchinleck's class, had obliged him against his wishes to go into the Guards. But, once enlisted, he applied himself to his profession with diligence and courage. The Peninsular War had taken the Guards from London — Boswell had caught them in the peaceful 1760s — and Aitchison was thrown into action almost as soon as reaching Spain. He was wounded in his first battle, Talavera, when he had the honourable but dangerous post of ensign of the King's Colour, and again in the advance to the Pyrenees in 1813. In between he had been at the battles of Salamanca and Busaco and the siege of Burgos, and in many skirmishes. He described all his military experiences in a weekly letter home to his father. The collection has been preserved by the family and is now issued in a scholarly edition, prepared by the late Brigadier Thompson, formerly military correspondent of the *Daily Telegraph* and no mean warrior himself — he commanded the parachute artillery regiment at Arnhem.

BUT AITCHISON'S letters are much more than campaigning reminiscences of the sort which abound for the Peninsula. There is something oddly Boswellian about them. They utterly lack Boswell's self-absorption, self-exposure, wild flashes of fancy and brilliant capture of atmosphere and overheard phrase. But they are very definitely about life, social and individual, its purpose, inspiration, rewards and vicissitudes. For someone of 20 his mind was already unusually formed and he expressed his feelings and views with strength and incisiveness. On the necessity for putting the sick out of the regimental carts to take in the wounded:

> Is the soldier rendered unfit for service by sickness not equally entitled? Nobody one would think would deny this. Yet Ministers by their conduct do! Do they then really suppose the moral feeling of a soldier so entirely calloused by service as to be indifferent at seeing his comrade abandoned to a miserable end, when no longer equal to his arduous duty?

On the psychology of combat:

> The force employed was of many different corps, Portuguese, British and Germans, and the men not appraised of the nature of the service for which they were required until the moment of the attack. They were thus unprepared for the desperate enterprise, and instead of having made up their minds they were taken in the moment of irresolution . . . they had no personal knowledge of the officer who commanded them and . . . they were unacquainted with each other. Nor was the honour of any particular corps pledged.

It would be difficult for a modern analyst of combat failure to improve on that. On the character of the war:

> The Portuguese armed peasantry always accompanied us and did wonders, but in Spain I never saw one armed peasant and indeed not one person seemed to have the least interest in the cause we came to support. We are good mercenaries but we are not strong enough, nor is it to be expected we can transform the war.

The same understanding of the need for national commitment appears later in an unwittingly prescient comment on Napoleon's 1813 campaign: 'Very favourable news from Germany. It requires only the *people* to take a decided part to make the contest there certain.'

He understood not only how revolution had changed warfare, but how essential finance and industry had become to it. His letters home to the laird are full of descriptions of the crops, how and when they are harvested, how transported to the market, what price they fetch and by how much the appearance of an army inflates it. He is a meticulous reporter, who even weighed his own pack before marching off to war. It weighed 27 lbs.

It is not surprising therefore that Aitchison's career flourished — though it is surprising that he persisted in it. 'There is something in the life of a subaltern on service so nearly approaching slavery as generally disgusts', he warned his brother, who wished to follow him into the Guards, and he specified poverty, bad health but above all 'the want of independence' as his reasons. But he himself, as a younger son, was trapped. Where Boswell would have given way to his feelings, and used his marvellous intelligence to paint things even blacker than they were, Aitchison reined his feelings in and applied his very considerable mind to boots and gaiters. He died a knight and a full general in a grand house in London.

John McVicar

Prison fodder

East End Underworld: Chapters in the Life of Arthur Harding by RAPHAEL SAMUEL
Routledge £11.50 & £6.95

If you like your history working-class and raw then this is your book. It's the oral testimony of a man now in his nineties recording how he worked, thieved and fought his way through a life that, apart from spells in prison, has been spent in the slums of East London. Arthur Harding's facts and truths about his life are offered straight and unembellished in Raphael Samuel's edited transcripts of tape recordings made between 1973 and '79.

Harding was born in Victorian London's most notorious criminal ghetto, the Nichol, roughly ten years before it was immortalised in Arthur Morrison's *The Child of the Jago* (1896). When Morrison's book was published the Nichol was in the throes of being rebuilt and absorbed into its encompassing borough, Bethnal Green. Any subculturalists wavering before the claims of slum clearance and rehousing experts can take heart, though, from the fact that the destruction of the ghetto's boundaries hasn't affected the capacity of the area to spawn an impressive breed of high-powered criminals. In contemporary times the neighbourhood bore and bred the Kray brothers and continues to supply a steady stream of defendants to the Old Bailey.

Harding's first ten years were spent living

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with the other five members of his family in one of the twelve rooms in a Nichol tenement. The three-storey building 'was like a set of barracks' but nevertheless their room had a picture of Queen Victoria on one wall and on another a holograph of the Crucifixion. Although Harding's life is like a celebration of Marx's ideas on the lumpenproletariat — he organises strike breakers in the General Strike, supports Mosley, becomes a police informer, and remains a staunch Tory — reading Gibbon's *Decline and Fall* . . . while in prison in 1902 'turned me against all religion' and he realises in old age that people only supported royalty 'because they genuinely believed all the nonsense printed about' them. Yet the overall pattern of Harding's life, as it comes over in his recollections, demonstrates the futility of reading anything significant into his political views or his forays into the political arena.

THIS PATTERN is established very early on in the Nichol where 'there were no stores like Woolworth's . . . if you wanted to pinch anything you had to go for the stalls'. Virtually from the time he could walk the city streets, Harding forages by any method that works — the only distinction in his mind between the illegal and the legal being that if you were legit you didn't have to worry about the police. Generally, though, he did have to worry about the police because he grew up and stayed in a world in which 'to survive you had to swindle someone'. Such was the impact this had on his childhood that when he later read Dickens he felt that like all the writers of that period Dickens never realised 'how clever children are'. Oliver Twist's helplessness was not realistic, Harding reasoned with the litmus test of his own childhood, since 'a child that . . . is a reasonable age, say eight or nine, can survive because it's got the instinct to survive — he'll thieve or he'll beg . . .'

The mould on Harding's character is first a strong criminogenic local culture and second an occupational structure which, because of London's lack of any monolithic industry but welter of small-scale trades, is even among the working class highly individualistic and entrepreneurial. Harding was a criminal live-wire from the moment he hit the streets. He took as naturally to 'van-dragging', 'shoot-flying', 'snide-dropping', counterfeiting, robbery and the use of firearms as he did bilking working-class people of the true value of their jewellery and clothes when two long prison sentences had turned him away from crime. Always he 'lives by his wits' and as he says when disparaging the Jewish anarchism of the 1910s he didn't have any political views because he had to scheme too much to live.

Of course, he does express political views and occasionally took political action but the former is rarely more than a verbal dressing to the justifications he offers us and the latter is more often than not a form of criminal opportunism. He sees the rich as less deserving than the poor, who 'are the best givers in the world', but all his actions in the economic sphere are intensely capitalistic and exploitative. Similarly, one believes him when he says that helping Mosley wasn't anything to do with disliking the Jews, just as breaking dock strikes didn't

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Winner of the Duff Cooper Prize, the James Tait Black Prize, and now the Royal Society of Literature's W.H. Heinemann Award, this is 'an accessible critical Life of the first rank' (*The Times*); 'a glorious portrait, every wart affectionately touched in' (*The Sunday Times*). Illustrated £12.95 *OUP/Faber and Faber*

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mean he was 'against them [strikers] except when they got in the way of the convoys'. These were just forms of criminal opportunism which afforded Harding a chance to earn a crust by whatever method didn't expose him to too many risks.

The book is Harding's own story and all of its facts and truths are his. Unlike a book I read recently on the life of jazz saxophonist Art Pepper, called *Straight Life,* in which the same approach of transcribed tapes is used, Harding's account isn't pointed by accounts from other parties to the incidents which he describes. For instance, most readers can't ring up, as I did, one of the characters whom Harding describes as working for him — Charlie Kray senior — and get an entirely different version. All the average reader will be able to do is read Samuel's footnotes, many of which through using contemporary newspaper reports suggest that Harding does rather gild the lily. Nonetheless, as long as one doesn't treat the book as working-class history, but just as one lumpen's version, then it can yield invaluable and virtually irretrievable insights into the development of criminal culture in London's East End. □

Peter Porter

Action poet

'For Freedom's Battle': Byron's Letters & Journals, Vol. 11 edited by Leslie A. Marchand *John Murray* £11.50

> Whoever goes into Greece at present should do it as Mrs. Fry went into Newgate — not in the expectation of meeting with any special indication of existing probity — but in the hope that time and better treatment will reclaim the present burglarious and larcenous tendencies which have followed this General Gaol delivery — ... the Saturnalia is still too recent to have converted the Slave into a sober Citizen.

Byron went to Greece's aid in 1823, with his eyes open, and his conduct thereafter, up until his death from fever at Missolonghi on 19 April 1824 was outstandingly generous and courageous, if seldom very glorious. A more good-humoured and fair-minded rescuer it would be difficult to imagine. And his death was high on the list of causes for the final intervention of the British and French fleets against the Turks at Navarino, and the success of the Greek rebellion. There is therefore a 'pre-echo' of triumph in these, the last letters of the superb archive which Professor Marchand has been collecting for Byron over the past decade. Posterity, of course, does not have the same point of interest as history, and avid readers of Bryon-in-exile will find less pure joy (and even less impure joy) in volume eleven than in its immediate predecessors.

Byron was happy in his last months, playing the man of action, and happy men make serious but not necessarily scintillating correspondents. What Yeats declared of Wilde was much more true of Byron: he was really a man of action. It was a role, and he played it marvellously well. Bothered, as he was on all sides, by unreliable and quarrelsome allies, he kept his head and never overplayed his hand. His personal influence and his extensive purse (his income was equal to the American President's or that of the French Ambassador in Vienna) were always available to the Greeks, but he would not lend his support to any one faction. Much of what he

writes is logistic, almost forensic, in its detail. There is still a lot more brilliant writing in these last letters than in most authors' life time's correspondence, but the relative absence of Douglas Kinnaird, John Murray, Hobhouse and Tom Moore from among his recipients, and the emergence of the names of forgotten members of the Greek Committee in London, and of soldiers and bankers in the Greek archipelago testify to Byron's changed angle of vision. His letters were at their unparalleled best when he was living in provincial isolation in Ravenna, and later, in restless frustration, in Pisa and Genoa. He had to make his world interesting by building it up for his friends at home, and he busily turned each piece of information from England back into the social stage which he had trodden with such acclaim. *Don Juan* shows him writing poetry with the speed, originality and wit which he had always purveyed in his letters — at last his talent as a man and as a poet come together. Even in poetry, the man of action prevails. In one of his last letters, to his half-sister Augusta, commenting on his daughter's preference of prose, a preference he shared, he writes, 'I hate *reading* verse — and always did.' Later, he comments, 'I could mouth . . . but I reserved such things for verse'.

The past tense in that sentence points to Byron's final preoccupation. He left *Don Juan* unfinished, and wrote nothing thereafter but a few scotched verses and the excel-

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lent and prescient 'On this day I complete my thirty-sixth year'. It upset Tom Moore that Byron's last letter to him should have been cool, but Moore had chided him for sitting on an island versifying, instead of fighting. Byron, who knew the practical difficulties, reproached Moore as much for thinking that poetry mattered to him as for doubting his courage.

After sailing from Genoa, Byron settled in Cephalonia with visits to such nearby islands as Zante and Ithaca (sadly lacking signs of Odysseus's former presence). It is fascinating for a modern reader to discover how extensive a presence Britain maintained in these waters, in the aftermath of the Napoleonic wars. Not just Army and Navy men (though them in plenty), but customs officers, doctors, evangelists, journalists Hellenophil adventurers, volunteers and scientists. Byron got on well with the military, and found them more honest and to his taste than the Greeks he dealt with. Napier in charge at Cephalonia was a particular friend: the same man was to be the conqueror of Sind and sender of the famous telegram, 'Peccavi'. He could not get his suliotes to move against Lepanto, and most of his money went in 'paying off arrears of fleets that sail away and soldiers that won't march'. By this time, he was on the mainland at Missolonghi, where he had a fit and was almost bled to death by his doctors. They accomplished this feat a few weeks later when he developed a fever after riding in the rain. His list of essential British specifics — Acton's Corn Rubbers, Waite's toothpowder, Smith's toothbrushes — couldn't save him from the medical profession.

Volume eleven also catches up with letters which have come to light since the series began, most important of which are those in the Scrope Davies trunk unearthed by Barclays Bank in 1976. Even more interesting are some passages from Byron's letters suppressed in Tom Moore's Journal. His wife makes several appearances ('the mathematical Medea'), and Wellington is called 'the pensioned impostor', but the gem among his epithets is reserved for Wordsworth, 'that pedlar-praising son of a bitch'. □

Duncan Forbes

Presage

Though I cupped my ear
To decipher where
The cheeping hunger

Of fledglings came from,
I caught sight, not of them,
But a casual victim,

Each rib in its skin
Showing through like a vein
On the back of a tongue,

Its open beak
Two chips of mosaic
Yellow as egg-yolk,

A spat-out plum
With the bud of a wing
And a tendril of leg,

Dead by my shoe
As if to foreshadow
The spring death and sorrow
We already know.

FICTION

Judy Cooke

The voyage in

The Affirmation by CHRISTOPHER PRIEST *Faber* £6.25
Hedylus by H.D. *Carcanet* £4.95
The Orchid Trilogy by JOCELYN BROOKE *Secker & Warburg* £9.95 *Penguin* £2.95
A Confederacy of Dunces by JOHN KENNEDY TOOLE *Allen Lane* £7.95 *Penguin* £2.50
Hello America by J.G. BALLARD *Cape* £6.50

The Affirmation is a kind of haunting in which narrator and reader alike become victims of illusion while the author, firmly in control, manipulates the switches on the ghost train.

Peter Sinclair has lost his job and his flat, his father is dead, an appalling row estranges him from his mistress, Garcia. At the point of breakdown, he retreats to a friend's cottage, determined to create 'a clearer vision of myself' by writing an autobiography; words have always seemed to him the touchstones of truth.

So begins a dizzying descent into fiction. Priest opposes madness and sanity, life and art, the elaborate narrative and the empty page — and then makes them interchangeable. His protagonist enters an imaginary landscape and is overtaken by a new identity. He is a citizen of Jethra, it transpires, not London. He has been awarded immortality and is doomed to travel the endless seas that lap the shores of Baker Street. The inner voyage becomes increasingly, insidiously attractive. Only occasionally does objective reality break through, as when Garcia is handed his precious manuscript and cries out 'I can't read blank paper! There's nothing there. Nothing.'

Altogether an original thriller, a study of schizophrenia set against questions of persona and plot.

Hedylus, a short novel by the talented writer H.D. (Hilda Doolittle) was first published in 1928 and now comes from Carcanet with an afterword, the author's notes and a tribute by her daughter Perdita. It is a poet's novel, rich in metaphor and meaning.

Set in the classical world, the story explores the predicament of Hedylus, the young son of the beautiful Hedyle and, indeed, her mirror image; he is dazzled by her presence, yet longs to find his own identity. She stands for the intellect and Athens; he is for the imagination, Alexandria, India. The psychological tension between the pair can be resolved only by their separation, deathly though this will be to Hedyle. Inevitably, events are precipitated by a young girl (in some ways, the theme parallels *Sons and Lovers*) but the mother's antagonism seems certain to blight the match. Enter a stranger, Demion — a god, a lost father, perhaps simply a free man — who gives Hedylus the courage to take his independence.

A stylish piece of prose, the writing achieves that clarity and precision so prized by H.D. and her fellow Imagists, Pound and Aldington. Its weak point is dialogue. Its strength is a sure sense of colour and form.

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TAVISTOCK

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The first volume of Brooke's trilogy has a superb title, *The Military Orchid.* It conveys the charm of this hybrid specimen, half-fiction, half-autobiography; it stands as a description of Brooke himself, soldier and botanist, ironist and enthusiast; best of all, it is a real plant, elegant, rare and unmistakably English, though known to do well in warmer climes. The author's life was singularly lacking in drama; his sufferings were stoically born, his pleasures quietly cultivated. It is his tone of voice and his sense of fun that bring the narrative alive; these, and a passion for Proust.

Brooke was born in 1908, saddled with that unique sense of privilege and oppression which burdened many writers of his generation. His parents were Christian Scientists, his nanny a strict Baptist. He nearly starved to death at his appalling boarding-school, ran away from his public school and ended up in Bedales, where sex was called silly (which didn't make it go away). His descriptions of these and later experiences — Oxford, the Army, the War — reveal a keen observer of English class.

Anthony Powell has written an affectionate introduction to the trilogy, which was first published between 1948 and 1950. Brooke died in 1966, one of the underrated talents in post-war letters.

I don't suppose James Joyce ever made it to St. Louis; his spirit haunts the pages of *A Confederacy of Dunces,* a novel set in that city and a robust comedy in which the jokes are theological, scatological and literary. The central character, blue-and-yellow eyed Ignatius, could almost be an amalgam of Stephen and Bloom.

Almost. John Kennedy Toole was American, his sense of humour nurtured by Max Shulman and Lenny Bruce, his irritation provoked by the various excesses of the Sixties. I found it hard to hang in with our hero — a bloated grotesque in a green deerstalker — until I met his girlfriend, the earnest Myrna Minkoff, corresponding from New York. 'You need the therapy of sex desperately. I'm afraid — from what I know about clinical cases like yours — that you may end up a psychosomatic invalid like Elizabeth B. Browning.' Small wonder that Ignatius is on a crusade against men, women, work and the modern world.

Sadly, the author did not live to see the book's success. He had a genuine gift for satire and the energy to sustain a long, funny narrative.

Hello America is mordant and inventive, J.G. Ballard at his best. Wayne 'a seaborne Tom Sawyer' is a stowaway aboard the *Apollo,* a ship carrying an expedition back from Europe to the desolate U.S. The disasters of the late Eighties dried up the Mississippi and made the eastern seaboard a desert; lizards and cacti are dotted along the avenues of Manhattan.

In true pioneering style, Wayne makes the trek West, distilling alcohol from whisky to get water, intrigued by the nomad Indians, the Bureaucrats, the Gays, the Divorcees (an all woman tribe from Reno). There are plenty of jokes and a few unpleasant surprises, a reincarnate Charles Manson being one. Wayne gets to be President; the reader gets to think about the energy crisis. □

Westminster: Palace and Parliament

Patrick Cormack
With a foreword by the Rt Hon George Thomas, Speaker of the House of Commons

A thoroughly readable, well illustrated, general history of the building and what goes on inside it. This magnificent book seeks to give 'the feel' of the place and to be 'guide, philosopher and friend' to all who are fascinated by Westminster, the Mother of Parliaments. '... it is a good and ingenious book. In fact it is an excellent guide book for the visitor, a useful record for posterity, enjoyable even for those who will never see Westminster and are not politicians — indeed for them perhaps its value is greatest. For Patrick Cormack is very readable so that even the most grumpy cynic may find himself reading on, looking at the pictures and mellowing a little towards his elected representatives.... Mr Cormack... has succeeded better than most professional historians in writing a short history of Parliamentary government. This book opens the eyes and the mind and what more could you demand?' — **The Rt Hon Jo Grimond MP; The Irish Times.** **£9.95 net**

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W

ART

John Spurling

The disciples

Keith Vaughan: Images of Man *Geffrye Museum, London E2 until 28 June, then City Museum, Birmingham*
Mary Potter *Serpentine until 28 June, then King's Lynn, Sheffield, Chichester*

'Bloomsbury' is perhaps an overdone term of opprobrium, yet there is no word which suggests so well a certain area of English culture, refined, sensitive, reticent and at the same time established, cosy, exclusive; to its initiates something won against the philistinism of the Victorian upper-middle class, to outsiders the cultural bureau of that class's hegemony, now doubly distasteful for being faded and nostalgic as well as still, in influential quarters like the Tate and the Arts Council, established.

Keith Vaughan, then 39, attended a dinner-party given by John Lehmann in 1952, at which the guests included Forster, Isherwood and William Plomer. Afterwards Vaughan wrote in his Journal (published by Alan Ross in 1966) of

> people famous in their age who no longer counted for anything really important ... Who incorporated, certainly, much of value from the past but were grown too comfortable. Quiet liberal values. Significant how often the name of Virginia Woolf was mentioned, rather as the disciples at Emmaus might have talked of the Virgin Mary.

Vaughan himself (he died in 1977) was refined, sensitive and reticent and became by most standards established — he made an important mural for the Festival of Britain and was later awarded the CBE. Yet just as, having been a person especially dependent on companionship, he chose to live a fairly reclusive life, so he rigorously set himself as an artist not to rest on any achieved refinement, not to be content with the recognisably sensitive in a minor tradition, but to go bust for the big stuff, to be a figure painter after Cézanne, Picasso and Matisse.

His paintings between 1946 and 1960, the period covered by this exhibition, are not immediately likeable. Although he did some pure landscapes, these are all of male figures in landscape or interior settings. The outlines are heavy and at first angular, but even when they become more curvaceous and graceful, the bumps of the knees, the disproportionately small heads, the sheer presence of so many weighty appendages (arms, legs and sometimes sex) to the torso, seem to counteract grace with awkwardness. Nor are the colours at all seductive. There is hardly

Among this week's contributors:

MARTIN SHAW lectures at Hull University and has recently written *Socialism and Militarism,* a pamphlet from Spokesman.

ELAINE MORGAN began writing for television in 1952. Her recent credits include *Testament of Youth* and *The Life and Times of Lloyd George.*

JOHN KEEGAN is co-author of *The Nature of War,* published by Cape in April.

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any red. It is an ochre-ish world, in which cold blue or green relieves the prevailing browns and yellows.

The poses of the figures are also earth-bound, drooping, flowing towards one another, but never bounding or leaping. The energy, even in the later overtly heroic figures is passive, a matter of endurance rather than initiated action. The landscape settings seldom give more space than the interiors. They are closed in with rocks, branches and dark skies. The figures indeed are imprisoned in nature. 'It is a commonplace,' Vaughan wrote in his Journal in 1964, 'that one's body belongs more to the environment, to nature, than to oneself'. Maybe, but it is not a commonplace that the cultured Englishman is generally disposed to recognise. Gainsborough's *Mr and Mrs Andrews* embodies the opposite, more flattering feeling that nature, or at least these few acres of it, belongs to oneself.

The Geffrye Museum — itself a claustrophobic place devoted to historical interiors — is not the best setting for Vaughan's paintings and it takes some time to distinguish his lyrical vein from his tragic and to see how both coalesce in the later work, especially in a fine *Martyrdom of St Sebastian*. But the real difficulty is that, for all their show of toughness and ambition, these are inescapable Bloomsbury paintings. Their pathos is not that of mankind or nature faced with a bleak existence and imminent annihilation, but of a sheltered and cultivated 20th-century sensibility partly at odds with its class and society.

Images can be found to express this sort of unhappiness and have been, by the best painters and writers of this century, including Virginia Woolf. But they must be built out of painstaking detail and intellectual exactitude, not by invoking the heroic simplicity of the past. It was only after 1959 and a liberating trip to America that Vaughan relaxed into a semi-abstraction which allowed his figures to become ghosts or memories of themselves and so, paradoxically, more real both to himself and the viewer. Much as he wished not to be, Vaughan was at home round that dinner-table.

MARY POTTER, born with the century and still going strong, has never resisted her destiny. Taught by Tonks and Steer, she has a quintessentially Bloomsbury sensibility for misty landscape, rooms with views, pale earthy colours and a few lively sprigs of plant-life in the foreground. Her recent more abstract oils, in which tastefully-arranged still-life elements float in a vacuum, would work better as fabric-patterns than as self-sufficient pictures; but many of the small water-colours and some of the earlier oils have that sense of momentary suspension, of inward reflection transposed by a turn of the light and a flick of the wrist on to outward objects, which Virginia Woolf could manage in words but none of the actual Bloomsbury painters in paint. □

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A staff sergeant barks at Private Joann Johnson in *Soldier Girls*.

FILMS

John Coleman

Lady killers

That Sinking Feeling (A) *ICA*
Soldier Girls (AA) and **1 + 1 = 3** (AA) *Paris Pullman; Phoenix, from 7 June*
Portrait of Teresa (A) *Gate 3*
Germany, Pale Mother (AA) *Screen on the Hill*
Nighthawks (X) *Plaza*

Bill Forsyth got a glowing reception at the 1979 Edinburgh and London film festivals with his first feature, *That Sinking Feeling,* a debut as exciting in its way as that of Milos Forman's *Peter and Pavla* in Venice 15 years earlier. A few lucky Londoners may at last catch it at the ICA. (Mercifully, his second film, *Gregory's Girl,* will be available in three or four metropolitan houses next week. Watch this space.) Forsyth is a Glaswegian, one of the founding students of our National Film School, and his superb, indigenous comedy is, in his own sly words, 'a street movie . . . dedicated to the prowlers of my city, the pioneer town of the post-industrial revolution'. With one out of every two school-leavers now doomed to the dole, it has possibly even more social resonance for 1981.

But Forsyth earns our gratitude in a grey age by leaving the message to take care of itself, concentrating instead on the harmless antics of a group of poker-faced young loonies (mostly drawn from the vividly talented ranks of the Glasgow Youth Theatre) who plot the theft of 90-odd stainless steel sinks from a warehouse, carry it out with unwarranted success and then have trouble disposing of the goods. The director's marvellous script, pawky, thrifty, less surreal than superreal in a high Scots tradition, is matched by an eye for his drifters' behaviour. The diminutive leader, Ronnie (Robert Buchanan), with a nervous, wolf-toothed smile and a penchant for chatting up park statues, scattily makes for open spaces at the planning stage, fearful of non-existent eavesdroppers. One morale-boosting chat is conducted with a seasick recruit on a lake-borne pedalo; another finds conspirators among high grass, innocent bairns dotted around like bland buddhas. The scheme entails tall Vic (John Hughes) donning drag to distract a nightwatchman, watched with a sulking incredulity by his girlfriend as he grows simperingly into the role. The invention is as unflagging as the quality of observation. To the invocation of early Milos Forman might be added a mention of Tati: gags, planted early, sprout beautifully later. But Bill Forsyth is an original and *That Sinking Feeling* deserves a wider audience. Word goes it cropped up briefly in Scotland in a double bill with *Elvis the Movie* . . .

ANOTHER GRADUATE of that same National Film School class, Nick Broomfield, collaborates once again with the equally sterling Joan Churchill (their previous 'documents' have included *Juvenile Liaison* and *Tattooed Tears*) in an unwavering stare at the lot of three young women out of 50 US army volunteers during basic training at Fort Gordon in Georgia. *Soldier Girls,* shot and recorded over 14 weeks during which Churchill and Broomfield shared the rigours of the recruits, is too complex in effect to be called an 'indictment' of any one abuse, unless it be the seductive promotional promises that have lured 18-year-old girls into an 18-month contract in the first place. As ever, the viewer — and I do not accept that the term 'voyeur' would be more appropriate when such honest and concerned recorders have been at work, *and* with the army's blessing — is likely to be amazed at people's inhumanity towards people. Private Joann Johnson, a black girl from Mississippi, would be the group clown under happier circumstances, with a helmet too big for her and a faint, indomitable grin at her inadequacies. 'Just the way you stand radiates total apathy,' barks a staff sergeant as she slouches in her dressing gown, summoned from the showers, before him.

The wickedest treatment, though, is handed out to Private Clara Alves, a former airport security guard from Newark, moon-faced and wanting out. Private Jackie Hall, from New Rochelle, at first accords hugging comfort to her fellow-sufferers: 'If we can get through this, we can get through anything', but, upped to squad leader, is detailed to supervise Alves as she digs into the night as punishment. Alves revolts and is hauled before three sergeants (2m.,1f.). 'Do me a favour. Don't have any children,' says Sergeant Abing, and his female peer is even more outrageous. Later, as Alves stolidly prepares to leave this man's army, she admits to her chums she has faked inefficiency and seems almost tolerant of the verbal violation she underwent, in the cause of 'motivation'. 'Sometimes they overdo it,'

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she murmurs.

A male NCO biting off a live chicken's head in front of a seated class; Johnson doing multiple press-ups in full kit; trotting mixed squads bellowing, 'Pillage, plunder, burn, rape!'; a lecturette mentioning 'the friendly use of nuclear weapons' — they overdo it, all right. Yet there are alleviations. Off duty, some of the girls chat about liking their boyfriends to dominate, one sweetly sings 'The Sound of Music', there is a sort of assuaging warmth during a late sequence titled 'Pvt Johnson Packs To Go Home'; and the grim-visaged monster, Staff Sergeant Abing, ex-Marine, explores his own failings to camera with terrible candour. After Vietnam, 'a large part of humanity, your soul, is gone'. He has no love, not even to visit an ailing mother. 'This is all I've got. There's nothing left.' Yet he worries, in the depths of his scoured, macho being, about females being killed in fighting. The rank, and ranking, idiocy of war is infinitely better defined by this compulsive 'peace-time' record than by a dozen vaunted extravaganzas of the school of *The Deer Hunter* and *Apocalypse Now*.

Heidi Genée's *1 + 1 = 3* focusses on Katerina (Adelheid Arndt), a winsome actress in Hamburg. Impregnated by Bernhard (Dominik Graf), her over-casual lawyer lover, she decides to have the baby but not Bernhard. During a Mediterranean holiday, she meets an amiable, entomological divorcé, balding Jürgen (Christoph Quest), and finally moves in with him and his mother back in Hamburg. There is a splendid lunch-table scene during which she explains to this dumbfounded lady it is not Jürgen's child she is carrying and she is not going to marry him, equalled only by a previous cab-episode during which she introduces Bernhard and Jürgen, spelling out their respective statuses, to each other. 'Know the way, at least?' asks the quizzical taxi driver of a Katerina left understandably alone. 'Straight ahead,' she says firmly. The film is actually more authentically devious, Katerina's way being strewn with pangs and pitfalls. But a defiant merriness keeps breaking through.

Appalled at the nursery-in-waiting Jürgen proudly shows her, she realises he wants a baby more than he wants her. Why won't she do her pre-natal exercises? 'Because I want to scream at the midwife.' My only complaint about this assured and fairly subtle affair, delightfully played, is probably an index of that weary old male chauvinism. Surely the men might have been given slightly less weedy legs to stand on? Bernhard seems to think a bunch of flowers solves everything, as does the really caricatural figure of Katerina's smug brother-in-law, who swipes her across the face with a bouquet for having encouraged his wife to move out with their three kids and herself have an abortion. And even Bernhard is kitted out with a helpless, self-pitying dad, spurned by his missus after 32 years. The feminine solidarity of the close, at the clinic, is pungently convincing and attractive.

From Cuba, Pastor Vega's *Portrait of Teresa* features his wife, Daysi Granados, in the title role and she grabs it with both hands. This Teresa is expected by her TV repairman husband Ramon (Adolfo Llaurado), a dubious charmer, to combine full-time at the factory with full-time as his wife and mother of their three kids. On top of this, the factory wheedle her into leading their amateur dance troupe to cultural fame. If this sounds both unduly weighted and tiresomely structured, the event is mostly disarming, deploying a discreet but colourful gift for neo-realism, with fascinating side-swipes at the way Cuban television still down-grades women. Up the revolution, maybe, but on this lively evidence it still has a long way to go for non-males. 'Not even Fidel can change it,' nods Teresa's mother, acquiescently.

Last, and bleakest, is a film from Helma Sanders-Brahms, who made the acclaimed *Shirin's Wedding*. Taking its title from a Brecht poem, *Germany, Pale Mother,* this manifestly autobiographical work suffers most of the dangers of the genre — private allusions, bothersome lacunae and plot-jumps — without the blazing compensating capacity to make images that arrest (as in Tarkovsky's *Mirror,* for instance). The greatest achievement of this pursuit of one Lene (Eva Mattes) through marriage and motherhood in Germany during and after the last war is a moment of life-like radiance as the woman, home in ruins, light-heartedly trudges off, kid on her shoulders, in high heels: mother-courage with a twist. *Nighthawks* is a vigilante mess masquerading as a message, with Sylvester Stallone as a benumbing anti-terrorist cop. □

TELEVISION

William Boyd

Fivers galore

EVEN AFTER four episodes of *Private Schulz* (BBC-2) it's still not clear if its success is achieved by design or happy accident; whether it's being played solely for laughs or whether it's deliberately choosing to occupy the tricky borderline area between black comedy and the theatre of the absurd. The main reason for this uncertainty is to do with the way Michael Elphick handles the title role as the feckless private responsible for undermining the British war-time economy with forged banknotes. His acting is understated in the extreme: neither fully-fledged comic naif, nor scheming barrack-room lawyer. Schulz seems at times hopelessly inept — as, a few hours after parachuting into England, he wanders into a pub and orders a cup of coffee — at times wily and manipulating, effectively maintaining the existence of his band of forgers through careful exploitation of the many weaknesses of his egregious boss, Major Neuheim (Ian Richardson).

The central comic performance in *Schulz* is without any doubt Richardson's as Neuheim. The SS major is a monster of blinkered avarice, a shouting posturing bully. Most of the laughs arise out of the towering apoplectic rages he directs at the hapless, flinching Schulz. It was a wise decision not to use any stage-Germanic accents. Richardson's haughty, impeccably patrician tones, and Elphick's up-market cockney give the relationship a particularly English flavour, despite the German uniforms. It's as much a confrontation between two classes as two men.

At times, however, the programme seems unconcerned to go for even a chuckle — though, on reflection, this relaxed attitude may be what makes it stand out from other television comedies. In episode three Schulz parachuted into England with millions of pounds of forged fivers, only to find his English contact (also — significantly — played by Richardson) had been 'turned'. The rest of the programme consisted of a prolonged and bizarre chase sequence, with Schulz ultimately making it back to France in a little boat, ostensibly to collect troops from Dunkirk. He strolls through the squads of beleaguered men on the beach, steals a hearse and sets off for Germany. He ends up, though, in a huge French chateau where an impoverished French aristocrat offers herself to him in return for a wad of fivers. The wild improbability of this whole chain of events surprisingly didn't draw hoots of scornful dissent. Life, *Private Schulz* engagingly convinces us, really is as weird and disorganised as it is made to seem here.

The scriptwriter — the late Jack Pulman — certainly knew how armies work. I would have thought, too, that a writer as renowned as James Mitchell would have no difficulty in convincingly presenting the denizens of the suburban Gucci belt where he's chosen to set his latest series *Goodbye Darling. . .* (BBC-1). Alas no. The characters are awesomely wooden and uninspired, and in this first episode there wasn't a spark of originality or freshness that would warrant following the further programmes. This week saw the return of electronics salesman Jonathan Cowper (George Baker) to his philandering wife Ann (Moira Redmond). Jonathan has shot his way out of a kidnap attempt in a South American state, saved El Presidente's son and thereby landed his firm a whacking multi-million contract. His new status as hero and wealthy man (all that commission) resolves him to shake things up at home and in his snobbish patronising neighbourhood. *Goodbye Darling. . .* has been jestingly billed as an English *Dallas*. It can't be done — no matter how many Porsches and BMWs you hire — and certainly not with this tired bunch of stereotypes. The recent season of Tennessee Williams films, particularly *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof,* showed where *Dallas* originated. You need *grand guignol,* towering immoderate passions, extremes of everything, in fact. I'm afraid our middle classes haven't got what it takes.

'EVERYBODY wanks here,' said a boy in *Public School* (BBC-1) unwittingly providing a possible explanation. This episode, concentrating on sex, is the only one so far to have come *anywhere* near to giving an accurate picture of life in an all-male boarding school as the boys experience it. Trying, for once, to gauge this, the programme interviewed three self-appointed lads, smug with locker-room bravado, but who seemed more concerned to let viewers know how sexually mature they were. Their insouciance was, however, steadily undermined and they became more expansive and revealing. Some notion of the pullulating sexual and emotional obsessions that exist in a boarding school was conveyed by shots of

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studies papered floor to ceiling with sprawling pin-ups and also by a classic meat-market school dance. 'The boys have a first glimpse of what's on offer,' the commentator said without a trace of irony. 'I don't think I'm living in cloud-cuckoo land,' the headmaster worriedly observed. Oh no? This was the prison governor's view of the prison.

MUSIC

Andrew Clements

Karajan: sound in torrents

ANYONE LUCKY enough to get a ticket for either of the Berlin Philharmonic's concerts in Britain last week might have been taken aback by an apparent change in Herbert Von Karajan. We are used to a magisterial, remote figure, carefully stage managing his platform appearances, but for this concert in Oxford at least he presented a much more forthcoming image, relaxed and benign. Whether this metamorphosis will be reflected in his performances and recordings only time will tell. Certainly the new release of *Parsifal* (Deutsche Grammophon 2741 002, five records) is in the glossy, hi-tech tradition of his recent work in the studio, now given the added definition of digital techniques.

Since he began the Salzburg Easter Festival in 1967, Von Karajan has combined his work there as conductor and opera director with his recording plans. Productions are brought to musical perfection, committed to disc and only then worked up for the stage, so that singers can concentrate on their acting knowing that the most demanding part of their preparations is over. Thus *Parsifal,* first staged last year. It is a work, we are told, very close to Karajan's heart, and this set is the result of a prolonged gestation. Of all Wagner's music-dramas, also, it is one in which he might be expected to excel, requiring at the same time an ability to mould and refine enormous paragraphs and a concentration on dramatic detail on a microscopic scale.

By and large one's expectations are fulfilled. The Berlin Philharmonic has of course an inestimable advantage in music that draws upon such resources of sustained string and brass tone; the Chorus of the Deutsche Oper, Berlin cannot be faulted. In Karajan's opera recordings (as also, paradoxically, in Boulez's) we are used to his fondness for neutral voices to which his direction can bring inflection and point, and which can be manipulated in the mixing of the final master tape. Here too, there are instances of technical intervention, when the voices ride a torrent of orchestral sound more effortlessly than they could in even the Bayreuth Festspielhaus with its sunken orchestral pit, and when moments later every detail of an interlude is registered with maximum force and clarity. Kurt Moll (Gurnemanz) and Jose van Dam (Amfortas) are the pick of the cast, neither of them of course 'neutral' singers, but fitting well into Karajan's masterplan. Peter Hofmann's Parsifal we know well in London from the hapless Covent Garden production, and more recently his Siegmund was heard in Friedrich's *Ring*; deprived of his authentic good looks he sounds underpowered in this recording, the character not sufficiently rounded, the tone too impure. Dunja Vejzovic's Kundry seems a little like a characterisation in the making, for all its subtleties and beauty of tone. If the version does not quite displace one's fondness for Knappertsbusch's Bayreuth live recording made in 1962, it can be regarded as the *summa* of Karajan's recent series of opera recordings, noble and stirring, showing yet another way into the most elusive of operas.

REMINDERS of Karajan's early work in preparing opera for disc come in the shape of re-releases from EMI of the two most illustrious products of his collaboration with the Philharmonia Orchestra in the 1950s. Karajan has recently recorded Verdi's *Falstaff* again (for Philips) but the spontaneity and wit of this 1957 account (EMI SLS 5211, two records) is matchless. The sound has come up well in this transfer — the set previously stretched on the six sides — and the overture's exuberance is an immediate testimony that no detail has been sacrificed for economy. Tito Gobbi's Falstaff is naturally the centrepiece of the performance, yet he is supported superbly by Rolando Panerai's Ford (the monologue on jealousy in Act One comes close to being the

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highpoint of the entire opera), Fedora Barbieri's Quickly and Elisabeth Schwarzkopf's Mistress Ford. Beneath the frothy tuttis one can find, even in a recording almost a quarter of a century old, Karajan's now familiar concern for detail, his exact rendering of every dynamic marking, the control of each phrase. On two records it is the obvious choice for anyone wishing to buy a version of *Falstaff*.

Similarly essential is Karajan's *Ariadne auf Naxos,* another EMI reissue, again with the Philharmonia Orchestra (RLS 760, three records). The single drawback to an otherwise exemplary cast is Rudolf Schock's Bacchus, coarse and out of focus most of the time — when will a graceful *Heldentenor* be persuaded to sing the part? — but Rita Streich's Zerbinetta especially, and Schwarzkopf's Ariadne are ample compensation.

An equally warm welcome also for Rafael Kubelik's brand-new version of Weber's *Der Freischütz* (Decca D235D3, three records). It is, apart from its other great virtues, a salutary reminder of what a good opera this is, honestly structured and full of memorable tunes and effective theatrical *coups*. Kubelik's conducting is sober and sensitive, with the Bavarian Radio Chorus and Orchestra and a solid, reliable cast (more than that in the case of Hildegard Behrens' Agathe and Peter Meven's Caspar). This recording does not supersede Carlos Kleiber's Deutsche Grammophon version but complements it; some may even find the greater urbanity of Kubelik more to their taste. □

THEATRE

Benedict Nightingale

Arden's return

Sergeant Musgrave's Dance by JOHN ARDEN
Cottesloe

Many people's first reaction to the revival of the play that moved Raymond Williams to call John Arden 'the most genuinely innovatory of the young dramatists of the 1950s' will surely be acute surprise at its habitat. Not so long ago, Arden was arguing that the British subsidised theatre was a conspiracy by the British government to win itself a reputation for tolerance and decency in order the more effectively to pursue its nefarious colonial and industrial aims; and the National was no doubt somewhere near the top of his hate-list. When its stage-staff went briefly on strike recently, there he was on the picket-line, bearing concrete witness to his own conversion from a 'hedger and a fence-sitter and a contemptible poltroon' into a marxist envangelical 'offering from (my) own hard experience the need for revolution and a socialistic society'. The first of these quotes comes from his 1970 radio play, *The Bagman,* essential reading for anyone who wants to understand the strong and principled reasons why Arden no longer writes plays like *Sergeant Musgrave's Dance* and no longer wants his work put on in establishment sanctuaries like Mr Hall's South Bank Oz.

And yet here is *Musgrave* at the National, and (moreover) staged in the 'balanced', 'fair' style that Arden rejected when he announced that the cartoon didacticism of his *Ballygombeen Bequest* should characterise future productions of his plays. Why? Is this a pirate performance or does it betoken some shift of attitude on the dramatist's part? If the latter, you won't get any crocodile tears from me, because I haven't particularly enjoyed the sight of so 'genuinely innovating' a writer committing artistic suttee: that is, conscientiously immolating his more remarkable talents on a pyre prepared by himself and his wife and collaborator, Margaretta D'Arcy. My sympathies are with drama that reaches its conclusions (and possibly even its radical conclusions) in full recognition of the complexity of the relevant evidence, and against signpost or straitjacket drama, which bundles captive minds down narrow paths to predetermined ends, like some of Arden's more recent work.

Back to *Musgrave,* which probably changed nothing directly, yet helped expand the moral, social and political consciousness of a generation. There's another reason, apart from its open-mindedness, why I'm surprised Arden should sanction its revival at the National; and that is because it propagates, if not exactly an untruth, at least an odd piece of wishful thinking on his part. The protagonist, a deserter from the Victorian army, wants to make men aware of the 'cruelty and greed' of the British abroad, cure the 'madness' we're exporting to our colonies, end imperial wars of 'sin and unjust blood', and 'change soldiers' duties', all by one act of exemplary terror: he will shoot 25 Englishmen in reprisal for the five natives killed by rampaging squaddies after a freedom-fighter murdered one of their comrades.

Now, there are several reasons why he fails in these aims, but one is especially emphasised at the play's end: 'you can't cure the pox by further whoring', meaning you can't stop violence by its own rules or end oppression by atrocity. But the painful truth is that you can: men have done and are still doing so. Why is the map of the world no longer one-third pink? Because methods analogous to Musgrave's do work, at least in particular political situations. 'Atrocities' vanquished us, 'terrorists' chased us away, as they are now successfully doing in Ulster. Arden, with his Irish republican sympathies, must know this. But in 1959 he espoused pacifism, and permitted a specious metaphor (after all, violence isn't VD) to inveigle him and us to a conclusion he will surely now find wrong-headed, and perhaps even dangerous.

Possibly this is a nitpicking objection, given the intellectual abundance of the play; and, given that abundance, possibly it's also nitpicking to point to its dramatic deficiencies. But most critics, including its own author, have sensed something wrong with it, and its popularity in academia has never extended to the theatregoing public. Some think the reason is simply that it makes too great mental and emotional demands on audiences, who aren't used to subtle moral contradictions, still less to a 'hero' who is both sympathetic and unsympathetic, admirable in his aims yet abhorrent in his methods, noble yet somehow absurd in his singleminded integrity. But this is surely much harder to believe nowadays than in the theatrically more innocent world of 1959; and so others have come up with more specific explanations. It is too melodramatic when one of Musgrave's co-deserters is accidentally bayoneted to death; at the end it ventures too far into the debating-chamber. Arden himself is especially critical of the important scene in which Musgrave's retributive ruse begins to become apparent: it fails, he thinks, to balance the business of giving enough information for the audience to understand the situation with withholding enough for tension to be sustained.

Watching John Burgess's spare, lucid production, with John Thaw's grizzled sergeant exuding the grim and disciplined fervour of the Old Testament deity he half-believes himself to be, I saw what he meant. Things do get a bit cumbersome at times, and not only technically so. One feels throughout that the pacifist Arden is earnestly and honestly working out his feelings about war, the responsibility for it, and how men may be weaned from it; but one also feels he's just a bit too conscious of such themes, too calculating in his concoction of a plot to parade them and of imagery to colour them. For all the passion of its parts, the play comes to seem somewhat dispassionate, even dry. This isn't to say it's the creation of an academic robot: just that there may be rather too much of the tweedy intellectual, the furrowed do-gooder, in the particular Arden who wrote it.

And yet, beside the Arden we're getting to know now, what a stimulating, exciting companion he was. How nice it would be to welcome him back. □

Weekend competition

No 2671 **Set by Jim Anthony**

A recent letter to *The Times* drew attention to a sonnet written by a computer at Cambridge University. The poem began:

> How can the purple yeti be so red,
> Or chestnuts, like a widgeon, calmly groan?
> No sheep is quite as crooked as a bed,
> Though chickens ever try to hide a bone.

Compers without computers should be able to produce similarly nonsensical sonnets constructed around nouns and verbs selected entirely at random. By 19 June.

No 2668 **Set by Ben Trovato**

Local newspaper reports written by Kipling, Greene, Dickens or Stoppard.

Report **By Frank Shortstraw**

No Kiplings worthy of inclusion, I'm afraid; perhaps the old boy defies imitation. But it's clear you've all been eating up your Greenes; Yorke finally took the laurels. Splendid Stoppards (Greenwell and Alexander), and goodish Dickens (May Day) completed the field. Ten smackeroonies apiece.

A colossal weariness — all the weariness of the world, it seemed to Kevin Jones of 5 Braemar Avenue, SE5 — overtook him as he drove home, belching rancid odours into the darkness. The sweetness of hops filled the car like vacuous hope,

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and Smith could feel his distended stomach resting contentedly on his sweating thighs.

'All right then, breathe into this.' Weariness was not the only thing to have overtaken him on his journey home from the riotous party at Witherspoon Road, Eltham Green. PC Overall handed Smith the obscene bag.

Jones was sickened by the despair that held him more strongly than any policeman. JIM YORKE

The vicar, the Rev G. Maw, appeared to have some difficulty in opening the new village hall, and the paradox was obvious, for a crowd was in that very hall awaiting its opening. It may have occurred to even the least intelligent onlooker — of whom there were many — that whereas a can of worms is either open or not a hall is less straightforward and perhaps Maw dimly realised that its being open or unopened is not a factual matter but one for decision — his *declaring* it open would *make* it open, in the relevant sense. As he did so declare it the matter was resolved — perhaps by the sheerest accident. PETER ALEXANDER

The Industry Street royal wedding party was a celebration not only of the Great Occasion, but also of that virtue after which the street was named.

What a fury of activity as, at No 10, Mrs Jolleybey, sleeves rolled up, dispensed hot pies and jellied eels! What rolling-out of barrels, steaming-up of chapel urns; what howling of infants, what running-about of boys, and dressing-up of girls by Miss Needlebody of No 3; and then what singing and dancing to the pipe of Paddy Leary who lodges at 25; what falling-out and making-up!

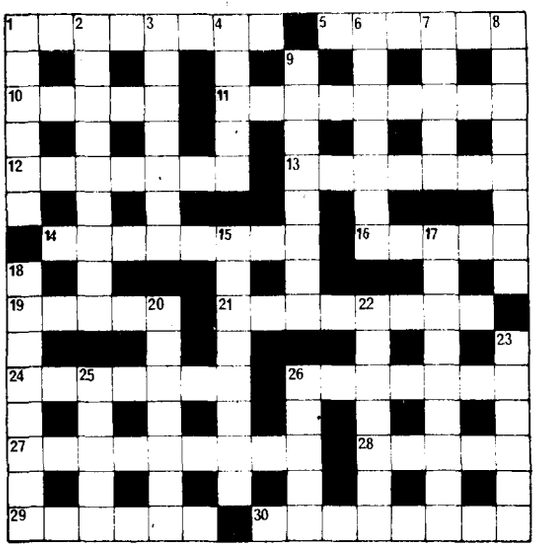
Who can say that in all London there was a jollier celebration? MAY DAY

The funeral of the late Judge Younger, formerly and latterly, but more formerly than latterly Mayor, occurred yesterday. There was a formal send-off of this latterly informal councillor, formerly counsel for criminal referees, quite a red card, but spades were trumps yesterday. At the burial his elder son, Judge Younger, known for his judicious elocution, pronounced some sentences. In a roundabout, electric speech, he spoke of the circuit which led his father to be, legally speaking, more dead than alive. 'He had a good heart,' commented Younger's elder youngster, 'though he had his grave side.' Earlier the late Judge Younger suffered a coronary, his crowning moment, while training for a sponsored Law Society jog. It was a trial run. BILL GREENWELL

Would Andrew Beazley, a winner last week, please contact the *NS* office.

Weekend Crossword 1384

PRIZES: Book tokens of £2 for the first three correct solutions opened. Entries to Crossword 1384, New Statesman, Great Turnstile, London WC1V 7HJ, by first post 16 June.



ACROSS

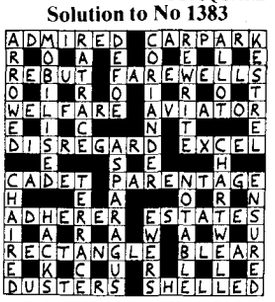
1 Received although milling around at two hundred deep (8)
5 Philosopher with high honour in northern town (6)
10 Someting from Christian nations paid to Pope (5)
11 Bird having uneasy feelings about most of the fruit (9)
12 Where people are about to travel (7)
13 Something showy starts games with children (7)
14 If love were missing the bird would be on fire (8)
16 Strikes up loud in large numbers (5)
19 Where pros go to hospital (5)
21 The most outstanding change their gear before a match (8)
24 A subject of satisfaction for a writer on sex (7)
26 Appear breathless about the match though calm (7)
27 Plant may be seen as red and pink (9)
28 City in whose prison a murderer is executed (5)
29 Summer is almost fall (6)
30 Resort where I am unable to enter the drink? (8)

DOWN

1 'Better dwell in the midst of — ' (Cowper) (6)
2 Make currency revive, but not in the provinces (9)
3 Place which makes the crazy give up climbing (7)
4 Marbles winner? (5)
6 Hostility when west is surrounded by misfortunes (7)
7 A replacement for it would turn boundary into capital (5)
8 The traveller gets wet going round the mountain (8)
9 Bird given sign of love with the port unfinished (8)
15 Garment which needs patching (8)
17 Feminine is her male but he may make a catch (9)
18 Sturdy booby in exam reverse (8)
20 European makes one direction admire another (7)
22 Giant I beat in less than a moment (7)
23 'But good men — for want of impudence' (Dryden) (6)
25 Damp as Nigella? (5)
26 Lever came in and we hoped all would be well (5)

SETSQUARE

Solution to No 1383


ADMIRED CARPARK
R O A E O E L E
REBUT FAREWELLS
O I R O I R O T
WELFARE AVIATOR
E I C N T E
DISREGARD EXCEL
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Publications

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J. G. Watts, M.A., Dip. Arch.,
Director of Housing Services,
Civic Centre,
Darwall Street,
WALSALL, WS1 1XU.

CLOSING DATE: TUESDAY, 30th June, 1981.

Walsall Metropolitan Borough

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Tower Hamlets Trades Council, Tower Hamlets Association for Racial Justice and the local community groups are establishing a project in the East End of London to encourage practical forms of international solidarity in the area. The aim is to develop understanding and to foster concrete common struggles linking workers and communities in Tower Hamlets and their counterparts in the capitals of the Third World.
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For further information write to **David Clarke, Oxford House, Derbyshire Street, London E2.**
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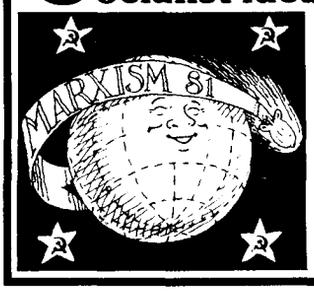

Marxism '81 is organised by the Socialist Worker Student Organisation. This year it is at Queen Mary College, Mile End Road, London E1. 10-17 July inclusive. £11.50 in advance, £13 at the door.

Write to SWSO, PO Box 82, London E2, or ring 01-986 8355, for further details.

Theatres

TheatreSpace
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ALDWYCH THEATRE Royal Shakespeare Company 836 6404. Recorded booking info. 836 5332 cc379 6233. **The Knight of the Burning Pestle** by Beaumont 8, 9 June. 'Fabulous & imaginative' F. Times. **Nicholas Nickleby** Few day seats & returns available. RSC also at The Warehouse (836 6808) in **The Accrington Pals** by Peter Whelan. **Outskirts** by Hanif Kureishi, joint winner of the George Devine Award 1980. RSC also at Piccadilly in Willy Russell's hilarious **Educating Rita.**

NATIONAL THEATRE 928 2252 Olivier (open stage) 'Amadeus', 'The Life of Galileo'. Lyttelton (proscenium stage) 'The Elephant Man'. 'Measure for Measure'. Cottesloe (small auditorium) 'Don Juan'. See daily press for dates and times or ring recorded information 928 2256.

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Poetry

MATCHLIGHT. British Poetry Today. Orangery/Holland Park. 11 June, 7.15. Elizabeth Jennings, Lotte Kramer. Enquiries 01-352 7409.

Exhibition

World of Islam Festival Trust
Exhibition of ISLAMIC MASTERPIECES
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The Chester Beatty Library
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Opera

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Collegiate Theatre
Gordon Street, WC1
Tel: 01-387 9629
10-13 June 7 p.m. (Sat. 6.30)
Tickets £4.50, £3.50, £3, £2.50

Dance

SADLER'S WELLS THEATRE, EC1. Tel. 01-837 1672/1673/3856. Credit Cards 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. 01-278 0871. Group Sales Box Office 01-379 6061. 8 to 20 June Merce Cunningham Dance Company. Evs 7.30. Sat Mats 2.30. Programme includes three London Premieres. Tkts From £1 (mat) to £7. 23 June to 4 July Twyla Tharp Dance. 6 to 11 July Ballet Stars of America.

Meetings

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL meeting on South Korea. Film & speakers. 12 June 8 p.m. Unitarian Church, Hoop Lane, NW11. *All welc.* Dtls 01-888 5993/328 1029.

ICA EVENTS, The Mall, London SW1. 9 June 7.30 Fidelis Morgan, Julie Holledge, Micheline Wandor discuss Women in Theatre against the background of the publication in May of their books which cover very different periods for women in theatre; 10 June 7.30 The first in a series of six evenings entitled The Poet as Historical Witness with Joseph Brodsky talking with Michael Scammell; 11 June 1.00 Stephen Rea reads from the work of Christy Nolan – Dam-Burst Of Dreams. Tickets £1.00 (ICA Day M'ship 40p) 930 3647.

JULIUS TOMIN on Christians and Marxists in Czechoslovakia Monday 22 June 7.30 p.m. University Chaplaincy, 111 Gower Street, WC1. *Admission £1 (students and OAPs 50p)* from Pax Christi Blackfriars Hall, Southampton Road, NW5 or at the door.

MANCHESTER FABIANS. Meetings 15 June & 15 July. Friends Meeting House,. Mount St, Manchester, 7.30 p.m. Also 17 June Evening Walk. Meet Alderley Edge Station 7 p.m. Details: Rochdale 55582.

PEGGY DUFF Memorial Meeting, Sunday 7 June, 7 p.m. Westminster Cathedral Conference Centre (2 mins Victoria). James Cameron, Michael Foot, Mary Kaldor, Roy Shaw and others.

RAMAKRISHNA VEDANTA CENTRE Sunday *lectures on religion and philosophy. Enquiries* 06285 26464.

SCIENCE, SUPERSTITION & the Paranormal. John Maddox on 'Debunking the Paranormal'. Wednesday 10 June at 7 p.m. The Library, Conway Hall, Red Lion Sq., London WC1. Organised by the National Secular Society.

THEOSOPHY: S.a.e. for pamphlets, book list, programme. Sun. 7 June 8 p.m. 'Applications of Theosophy'. ULT, 62 Queen's Gardens, London W2 3AL.

THE BUDDHIST PATH. Seminar on Zen, Tibetan and Theravada Schools. Speakers: Anne Bancroft, Sogyal Rinpoche, Dr Saddhatissa. £2. 10-6 Saturday 6 June at the Theosophical Society, 50 Gloucester Place, London W1H 3HJ. Tel: 01-935 9261.

TOWARDS A SOCIALIST TRANSPORT POLICY. Saturday 13 June 10.30 a.m. Conference at South Bank Poly Students' Union, Rotary Street (London Road), Elephant & Castle, London SE1. £2. Details from: SERA, 9 Poland Street, W1. 01-439 3749.

Courses

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BLAKE, PALMER and the English visionary tradition; Study Weekend 26-27 July, Polytechnic of Central London. Lecturers: David Bindman, Ray Watkinson. Fee £3.00. Further details: Short Course Unit, PCL, 309 Regent Street, W1. Tel: 01-580 2020, Ext. 221.

COURAGE AND CONFIDENCE. Where does it start and how? Residential Weekend School. 18-20 September 1981. St Hilda's College, Oxford. Talks, demonstrations, discussions, and experiential groups. Details: ASGB, c/o Mrs Anita M. Abbott, 24 The Green, Edlesborough, Nr Dunstable, Beds, LU6 2JF.

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POLITICS, POWER and the Trade Unions. A WEA residential course, based at Westminster, which examines the role of the Unions in National politics and Policy making. 13-17 July. Speakers include MPs Tony Benn, Reg Race, Phillip Whitehead. Visits to TUC, Labour Party and Treasury. £59 (£20 non-residential). Further details: WEA, 17 Princess Victoria St, Bristol 8. Tel. 32422.

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